THE ZEALOUS CHRISTIAN

Taking Heaven by

HOLY VIOLENCE:

IN SEVERAL

SERMONS

Tending to direct men

How { *To bear with Zeal,* / *To pray with importunity.*

Preached by that faithful servant of *Jesus Christ,*

Mr. *CHRISTOPHER LOVE,*

Late Minister of *Laurence Jury,* London.

--The violent take it by force, Mat. 11. 12.

LONDON,

Printed for *John Rothwell,* at the Fountain and Bear in *Goldsmiths row,* in *Cheap-side,* 1654.

April 11, 1896
Wm De Loss Love Jr.

TO THE

CHRISTIAN Reader.

READER:

THe good acceptance which this Authors Treatiſes, (already publiſhed by us) have found, and the good ſucceſſe they have had among the people of God, together with the importunate deſires of many godly perſons, that were hearers of theſe *SERMONS*, have put us upon recommending them to the world. The ſubject of theſe Sermons is not only pious but ſeaſonable, *Every thing* (ſaith *Solomon*) *is beautifull in its ſeaſon*, *Eccleſ.* 3. 11. The times wherein we live are famous for *a Form of godlineſſe*, and no leſſe infamous for the wont of the *Power* of it. Nothing is

more common then for men to hear, and pray, and perform the out-ſide-duties of Religion: nothing more rare then for men to do theſe things as becomes the Goſpel. Men have ſo inured themſelves to diſputes about the circumſtantials of Worſhip, that ſubſtantials are loſt in the ſcuffle. And therefore it is commendable in a Miniſter to reduce the thoughts and hearts of people from needleſſe controverſies to the practicals of Chriſtianity. As *Socrates* was commended for bringing down *Philoſophie* from high and ſublime ſpeculation, to uſe and practice.

It was the care of this Reverend Authour, not ſo much to gratifie the fancies of men, as to work upon their affections, and to direct them in the ordering of their converſation: and that the rather, becauſe he obſerved moſt men had more heat in their Brains, then in their Hearts. That zeal that once appeared in the profeſſours of this Nation, is evaporated. That violence that ſomtimes was in the people of this Nation after Sermons and all Ordinances, is now abated, and grown remiſſe; nay, in ſome, the hatred wherewith they hate the Ordinances and people of God, is greater then ever was the love wherewith they loved them. That praying Spirit, that not long ago was ſhed abroad in the hearts of Gods people, is now as it were departed.

It is therefore high time to beſpeak this careleſſe Nation, or rather the profeſſors of this Nation, with that meſſage which God ſent to the Church of *Epheſus*, *Remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do thy firſt works, or elſe I will come againſt thee quickly, and remove thy Candleſtick out of his place.* *Revel.* 2. 5.

And oh! may theſe enſuing Sermons be uſeful to revive thoſe ſparks of zeal and importunity, that lie as it were

were under the aſhes. That was the end which the Author aimed at when he preached them to his Congregation, and that is a main end that we look to and hope for in the publication of them. The times wherein we live are times of much hypocriſie. There are many among us *that ſay they are Jews, and are not*; that have a *name to live, and are dead*: yea, there are many that *ſeem to be religious*, and yet not only deceive others, but alſo *deceive their own ſelves*. And therefore it is time for every man to ſearch and trie *if there be any way of wickedneſſe in him*. All is not gold that gliſters, nor are all Saints that ſo call themſelves, or are ſo called by others. *Rev. 2. 9, 3, 1.*

Here then is a Touch-ſtone by which you may examine your ſelves: Here is a Balance of the Sanctuary, wherein you may weigh your graces, and ſee whether they be light or no. It is one of the vaineſt and moſt fooliſh things in the world for men to cheat themſelves of eternal happineſs. We count it folly for a man to ſuffer himſelf to be cheated in a bargain, and yet what is loſt in one bargain may be regained in another. But here he that is cheated, is cheated irrecoverably. The loſs of the ſoul is irreparable. Precious is the redemption of ſouls, and it ceaſeth for ever. And yet there is a ſtrange ſtupidity among the ſons of men, whereby they are willing to be deceived, and jugled out of their ſoul-happineſs. They are willing to reſt themſelves upon any groundleſs preſumption, though it be ſo weak that they dare not put it to trial in their own hearts, themſelves being Judges O all you poor deluded ſouls! *How long will you love vanity, and follow after lies?* When you may go a ſure way, why will you run a hazard? Awake therefore O thou that ſleepeſt, and ſeriouſly betake thy ſelf to this weighty, neceſſary and profitable duty of examination; *Pſal 4.*

and

and in this work we hope this Treatise will be useful and acceptable; which if it be done, and the other branch not left undone, the Authours desire in preaching is satisfied, and our expectation in publishing answered; and that both those ends may be obteined, is the earnest desire of

Those that seek not
yours, but you:

Edmund Calamy.

Simeon Ashe.

Jeremiah Whitaker.

William Taylor.

Matthew Pool.

Matthew 11.12.

And from the dayes of John *the Baptist until now, the Kingdom of heaven ſuffereth violence, and the violent take it by force*

Sermons Preacht at Lawrence *Jury April* 22. 1649. *Sermon* I. The Context opened.

THis Text is part of the large commendation that Chriſt gives of the perſon and Miniſtery of *John* the Baptiſt. *John* was a crier in the Wilderneſs to publiſh the glory of Chriſt, and Chriſt an Herauld to proclaim the praiſe of *John*. And this he doth,

1 For his conſtancy in the doctrine of Religion, *verſe* 7. *What went you out to ſee? a reed ſhaken with the winde?* a light, fickle, and inconſtant Preacher, that like a reed turnes with every winde of doctrine. *John* was no ſuch man, not like a reed, to yield to the ſtream or blaſt of every winde, but like the oake or cedar that ſtands unmoveably in the midſt of the greateſt ſtormes.

2. For his holineſs and high meaſure of mortification, *verſ* 8. *What went you out to ſee? A man cleathed in ſoft raiment? John* was no ſuch man. He was not at all addicted to the garbe and pompe of the Court, but *He had a raiment of camels hair, and a leathern girdle about his loines*, *Matth.* 3. 4.

3 By comparing him with the former Prophets, with thoſe Teachers that went before him, *Verſe* 9. *What went you out to ſee? a Prophet? Yea, I ſay to you, and more then a Prophet*, & *Verſe* 11. *Verily, I ſay unto you. Amongſt them that are born of women, there hath*

hath not risen a greater then John the Baptist. He gives him the precedency above all his Predecessours; not in regard of the dignity of his office, but in respect of the perspicuity of his doctrine. Yet lest he might be proud himself, or others too much admire him it is added by way of qualification in the end of the 11th. *Verse*, *He that is least in the Kingdome of heaven is greater then he.* Those Disciples and Apostles that should live after the Resurrection of Christ, (from whence the Gospel or Kingdom of Heaven is dated) should be greater then *John*, in regard of that full knowledge and clear manifestation they should have of Christ.

4 He commends him for the successfulness of his Ministery, and that is set forth in the Text: *From the dayes of John the Baptist the Kingdom of Heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.* A little for the explication of the Text.

The Text opened.

Cœlum Empyreum.

By the Kingdome of Heaven] is not meant the glorious seat of the blessed Angels, but the Evangelical state of the Christian Church. [a] It signifies the preaching of the Gospel, and propagation of the Church. [b] It notes that state and condition of the Church which is properly called Christian. The Kingdome of Heaven is in Scripture interpreted a breaking off from the observation of the Ceremonial law, and a publishing of the Gospel by *John* the Baptist, and so it begun when *John* did first preach the Gospel. And whereas *Matthew* tels us, *Matth* 3.1. *John preached, saying, Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. Mark* calls this, *The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Mark* 1.1. And therefore it is that *John* is called an Evangelical Preacher.

a *Regnum cælorum denotat prædicationem Evangelii, & propagationem Ecclesiæ.* Paræus.

b *Regnum Dei significat statum, & conditionem Ecclesiæ, quæ propriè Christiana dicitur.* Camero *in Matth.* 18.1.

Suffereth violence] Violence is not to be taken as it is in our dayes of opposition, and as in the dayes of persecution; as it is in our dayes in opposition to right and justice, and as it was at the first comming in of the Gospel, when the wicked men of the World did go about to oppose and obstruct the publishing of the Gospel; but it is an holy violence, whereby men press forward to obtain the grace of this Kingdome. And so it is generally taken to be an holy violence of affection, or a gracious disposition that was implanted and wrought in the hearts of many men in *John* Baptists dayes.

Vio-

Violence is here opposed to lukewarmness and moderation in Religion, to that coldness and frozenness that is in the hearts of men under the preaching of the Word. It is called an holy violence, to distinguish between them that were Christians indeed and other men; to distinguish them from the Scribes and Pharisees that were cold and frozen under the Ministery of the Gospel. They were so earnest after Christ in the Gospel, that no difficulties or discouragements could take them off from their pursuits after Christ. c They were so greedy of Christ, that no force could pluck them away, but they would rather die then be drawn away from the Gospel. It is a metaphor taken from Warriours, who force their passage into a City, and take it by storm, and divide the spoil. The parallel phrase is, *Luke* 16. 16. *Every man presseth into the Kingdom of God.*

c *Adeò avidi sunt ut nullâ vi abstrahi possint, sed potius moriantur, quàm abstrahantur ab Evangelio.* Luther.

For the period of time wherein this violence was declared and expressed, it was in the 15th. yeer of *Tiberius*, as you read, *Luke* 3.1. in the 29th. yeer of Christ.

Many doctrines may be raised from these words, but I shall not multiply Observations. The first and main doctrine is taken from the time wherein this violence was, and the Doctrine is this.

Doct.

At the first promulgation of the Gospel, the preaching of the Word was more successful, multitudes of men did express more holy violence and vehemency of affection towards the service and worship of God then in any age beside. From the dayes of *John* the Baptist until now, the Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence. The people were cold and frozen under the Ministery of the Scribes and Pharisees, they were heated under the Ministery of *John*.

d *Frigebant sub ministerio legis Scribarum & Phariseorum, fervebant sub ministerio* Joannis. Musculus.

In the handling of this point two Questions must be answered.

1 Whence it came to pass, that people were at that time so fervent and affectionate towards the Gospel, that the Gospel was so successful then?

2 Whence it comes to pass, that it is no more successful now, or why that holy violence is now abated?

Quest. 1. Why the Gospel so successful then?

1 What are the reasons why it was so successful in the dayes of *John* the Baptist? I answer, divers reasons may be rendered.

Reason 1. *Natura hominum novitatis avida.* Mark 1.27.

1 Because of the novelty of the Gospel. New things are most affecting and pleasing to mans nature. This was the ground of the peoples admiration at Christ, *Mark* 1.27. *They were all amazed, saying, What new Doctrine is this? For with authority commandeth he the unclean spirits, and they obey him.* We are like to the Athenians, of whom it is written, *Acts* 17. 21. *They spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to heare some new thing.* While *Iohns* Ministery was new and fresh, all rejoyced in it, *Iohn* 5.35. *Ye were willing for a season to rejoyce in his light.* And so the Ministery of *Paul* was most successful among the Thessalonians in the beginning of it, 1 *Thess.* 2.1. *You know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain.* It was *Melanthons* observation, that men were favourers & followers of the Gospel when it first came into a place.

1 Thess. 2.1. τὴν εἴσοδον ἡμῶν. *Primum adventum nostrum. Principiis favebant, &c.*

Reason 2.

2 Another ground of the successfulness of the Gospel at that time is this: Because the prophecies of the Old Testament were to be accomplished, both for the extension of the Church in regard of place and persons, and the intension of affection. 1 For the extension of the Church in regard of place and persons, That was fore-spoken of in holy Writ, *Isa.* 54.1, 2. *Sing, ô barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travel with childe: for more are the children of the desolate then the children of the married wife, saith the Lord. Enlarge the place of thy tents, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations; spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes, &c.* Which place is applied by *Paul* to the conversion of the Gentiles upon the first promulgation of the Gospel, *Gal.* 4.27. where he cites the very words of the first Verse now mentioned.

Isa. 54.1, 2.

Another prophecie of the same nature you have, *Isa.* 2.2. *It shall come to pass in the last dayes, that the mountain of the Lords house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hils, and all Nations shall flow unto it.* Which promise in the same words is repeated, *Micah* 4.1. Another promise of the same nature is, *Isa* 60.3,4,5. and in many other places, which it is needless now to menti on.

Isa. 2.2.

Isa. 60.3,4,5.

2 There were promises also for the intention of the affections, *Isa.* 40.31. *They that wait upon the Lord shall renue their strength, they shall mount up with wings as Eagles.* The Eagle is a bird of the strongest and highest flight of any that flies in the

Isa. 40.31.

air.

air. So *Zach.*12.8. *In that day he that is feeble shall be as David, and the house of David shall be as God.* So *Psal.*110.3. It is propheſied of the firſt bringing in of the Goſpel, that *Thy people ſhall be a willing people in the day of thy power.* And this was to be when *God ſhould ſend forth the rod of his power out of Sion,* as it is *verſe* 2. You know what *Huſhai* ſaid of *David,* 2 *Sam.* 17.8. He and his men were *mighty men, and chafed in their mindes as a Bear robbed of her whelps in the field.* And yet he that is feeble ſhall be as *David. Deodate* refers this promiſe to the beginning of the Goſpel, and ſo *Cartwright.* That is the ſecond reaſon. Zach.12.8.

3 The Lord did this to put a greater glory upon the Goſpel, and to raiſe the eſtimation of it in the hearts of men: for had the Goſpel had but a few converts, and had it had but a little ſucceſs at the firſt promulgation of it, the people would not ſo much have taken notice of it, neither would they ſo much have admired it, nor ſo highly eſteemed of it, as they did. *Reaſon* 3.

4 This comes to paſs becauſe of the perſpicuity of the doctrine of the Goſpel above that of the Law. The Goſpel came now to be preached to the peoples capacity more then it was in the time of the Law. Though it is true, that pure Goſpel for the ſubſtance of it was preached in the time of the Law, yet not ſo plainly as in the time of the Goſpel. For the Law is nothing elſe but a dark Goſpel, and the Goſpel nothing elſe but a clear Law. The law was hid and veiled under dark ſhadows and ceremonies: But the Goſpel was clear and evident. This you have fully ſet forth, 2 *Cor.*3.15. *When* Moſes *was read, there was a veil upon their hearts, verſe* 16. and when *they turn to the Lord, the veil ſhall be taken away.* And *Verſe* 18. *But we all with open face behold as in a glaſs the glory of the Lord &c.* This is alſo foretold, *Iſa.*30.26. at the promulgation of the Goſpel, *The light of the Moon ſhall be as the light of the Sun, and the light of the Sun ſhall be ſevenfold as the light of ſeven dayes, &c.* *Reaſon* 4. 2 Cor.3.14. Iſa.30.26.

5 Becauſe of that great and glorious liberty which the Goſpel inſtated them in above the Law, I do not mean ſenſual, but a Chriſtian & holy, a Goſpel-liberty. Thus Baptiſm was appointed in the room of Circumciſion. Our Saviour made this proffer, *Come unto me, all you that are weary and heavy-laden, & I will give you reſt, Mat.*11.28. Which place is not onely to be underſtood *Reaſon* 5. Matth.11.28.

of

of labouring under the burden of sin, but also under the bondage and yoke of the Ceremonial law, under all those costly, painful and toilsome rites imposed upon them: which were a *yoke that neither they nor their fathers were able to bear*, as *Peter* speaks of Circumcision, *Acts* 15.10. And so you have the reasons for the Gospels success in the dayes of *John*. And thus much for the first question.

Acts 15.10.

Quest. 2. Why the Gospel not so successful now as formerly?

The second question is this: How comes it to pass that the Ministery of the Word is not so successful now as it was in the dayes of the first preaching of it? I answer, many reasons may be given. Some from the Minister, some from the people.

Reasons.

1 In regard of the Ministers.

1 In regard of the Minister, and they are five.

Reason 1. Luke 1.16.

1 Because Ministers are not so powerful in preaching, and exemplary in life as *John* was, *John* 5.35. *He was a burning and a shining light*. There was his zeal in preaching, there was the holiness of his conversation. *Luke* 1.16. *And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God, and he shall go before them in the spirit and power of* Elias, *to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, &c.* Nazianzen said of *Basil*, that he thundered in his doctrine, and lightned in his life.

Reason 2. Mark 1.1,3.

2 Ministers preach not the Gospel so purely and perfectly as *John* did, *Mark* 1.1. *John* preached *the Gospel of Jesus Christ*. *Verse* 3. He preached repentance and remission of sins. Although *John* did bring in the Gospel, yet withall he preached up duties, and not cried down duties; he pressed on duties, and did not cast them off; he did earnestly press on the duties of the moral law, he preached repentance, whereas many Ministers now adayes account this but a legal and servile work not fit for Christians under the Gospel to be employed about, not fit for Ministers to preach, or people to hear. And this is one great reason why men take up such sinful liberty to follow their own wayes and lusts, and by which means the Gospel comes to be the less successful. But this you see was far from *Johns* minde and temper; for, said he, *Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand*, Matth. 3.2. *Oh generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?* was our Saviours language, *Matth.* 23.33.

Iere-

Ieremy 23.22. *But if they had ſtood in my counſel, and had cauſed my people to heare my words, then they ſhould have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings:* and *Verſe* 32. *Behold, I am againſt them that propheſie falſe dreams, ſaith the Lord, and do tell them, and cauſe my people to erre by their lies, and by their lightneſs; yet I ſent them not, nor commanded them, therefore they ſhall not profit this people at all, ſaith the Lord.* 2 *Cor.*4.2. *But we haue renounced the hidden things of diſhoneſty, not walking in craftineſs, nor handling the Word of God deceitfully, but by manifeſtation of the truth commending our ſelves to every mans conſcience in the ſight of God.* It doth enervate and emaſculate the power of the Word to have it mixed with falſhoods. Much truth is preached in the Church of *Rome*, yet converſion is not ordinarily amongſt them, becauſe they adulterate the truth by many errours.

Jer. 23.22.

32.

2 Cor. 4.2.

The Scribes did little good by their preaching, becauſe they did mingle ſo many ungrounded traditions which they taught without any authority, *Matth.*7.29. *Chriſt taught as one having authority, and not as the Scribes.*

Mat. 7.29.

3 Becauſe Miniſters preach not ſo plainly as *Iohn* did, either in matter, method, or manner of expreſſion. 1 *Cor.*14 part of the fifth *verſe*, ——*Greater is he that propheſieth then he that ſpeaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the Church may receive edifying.* Many Preachers are like *Heraclitus*, who was called the dark Doctor, they affect ſublime notions, obſcure expreſſions, uncouth phraſes, not making difficult truths plain, but plain truths difficult. *They darken counſel by words without knowledge, Iob* 38.2.

Reaſon 3.

1 Cor. 14.5.

Iob 38.2.

4 Becauſe Miniſters preach not ſo methodically as *Iohn* did. *Matth.*3.2. *Iohn* preached, ſaying, *Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand;* *Mark* ſaith, the Goſpel began with *Iohns* Miniſtery, *Mark* 1.1. and his doctrine began with repentance. Men take up other methods now adayes, and ſo prove unſucceſful.

Reaſon 4.

Mat. 3.2.

5 Becauſe there is not that harmony among Miniſters now that was formerly. *Iohn* preached what the Prophets taught, and Chriſt trod in *Iohns* ſteps, and the Apoſtles exactly agreed with and continued in the doctrine of their predeceſſours. But now in our time Miniſters are divided; one preacheth one thing,

Reaſon 5.

an-

another preacheth another thing; and this doth very much trouble the mindes of people, and makes many ſtumble at the Word, and ſo the Goſpel proves unſucceſful.

2 This comes to paſs from the people, and that for four reaſons.

2 In regard of the people.

Reaſon 1. Matth. 21.26. 1 People do more queſtion the office, and calling of the Miniſtery now then they did queſtion *Johns*, *Matth.*21.26.——*All men hold* John *as a Prophet*. The reaſon why *Pauls* Miniſtery was ineffectual to many *Corinthians* was this; *b*ecauſe they queſtioned his calling, and therefore he labours to vindicate his Apoſtolical authority all along the Epiſtle. This doth take off that awe and majeſty that ſhould be in men to the Word. As on the contrary, the reaſon why the Miniſtery of *Paul* was ſo effectual to the *Theſſalonians*, was this: *Becauſe when they received the Word of God, they received it not as the word of men, but (as it is in truth) as the Word of God, which effectually worketh in them that believe*, 1 *Theſſ.*2.13. I know that ſome queſtion the lawfulneſs of our Miniſtery upon this ground, becauſe miracles do not attend our preaching, as they did at the firſt promulgation of the Goſpel. But this is no juſt reaſon, and (that I may remove this obſtacle of the ſucceſs of the Goſpel) I ſhall by the way briefly diſprove it.

1 Theſſ.2.13.

Mat.21.25,26. John 10.41. *Miracula non ſunt multiplicanda ſine neceſſitate.* 1 Cor.1.22. 1 Cor.14.22.

1 *John* had his calling from heaven, *Matth.*21.25,26. and yet John *did no miracle*, John 10 41.

2 Miracles are not neceſſary now as they were at the firſt planting of the Goſpel. There was more need of miracles then, that the people might give attendance to the Miniſtery in thoſe dayes. *The* Jews *require a ſign*, 1 *Cor.*1.22. 1 *Cor.*14.22. *Tongues are for a ſign not to them that believe, but to them that believe not; but propheſying ſerveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe.*

2 Cor.12.12.

3 Miracles were ſignes of the Apoſtleſhip, but not of the Miniſtery, 2 *Cor.*12.12. *The ſignes of an Apoſtle were wrought among you in ſignes, and wonders, and mighty deeds.* *Timothy* and *Titus* could work no miracles, yet no man doubts of their authority. So that want of miracles doth not at all invalidate the authority of the Miniſtery. So I have removed the firſt impediment of the ſucceſs of the Goſpel in our dayes.

That

That is the first Reason.

Reason 2.

The long continuance of the Word makes it unsuccesful, (such is the corruption of mens hearts) The nature of man is for new things, and in tract of time the love of men to the Word is eaten out; whereas at the first people flocked to the Gospel, as Doves to the windows, yet afterward they grew careless and negligent in Gods Ordinances. Manna at first was loved, but afterwards it cloyed the Israelites, and they loathed it. Many men are Christ and Gospel-glutted.

Reason 3.

Another reason is, because Discipline is not joyned with Doctrine. The Church is the garden of God, the Doctrine is the flowers of this garden, Discipline is the hedge. Neither Christ nor *John* the Baptist by their coming would destroy the government of the Church among the Jews, and when that was taken down Christ set up another in its stead. Now look, as it is in a State, the intervals of government breed many State-heresies, if I may so call them, mutinies, factions, and parties among the people, interrupting the peace of the Land: So it is in the Church, when the reins of government are let loose, in-come errours and disorders; and the good seed is choaked by that means.

Reason 4.

4 This comes to pass from the dis-use of family-duties. The reason why the Reformation succeeded so well in *Germany*, was because the peoples catechizing went along with *Luthers* preaching. It was laid as a charge upon masters of families, that they should catechize their children, *Deut.6.6.7. And these words which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and thou shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, &c.*

Deut. 6,6,7.

People do not back the Ministers preaching of the Word with this duty of prayer, that God would sanctifie the Word preached to their souls, and make it succesful. It is an observable passage which you finde, *Mark* 4.24. *Take heed what you hear; for with what measure you mete it shall be measured to you, and unto you that hear shall more be given.* Sometimes this expression is referred to rash judgment, as *Matth.*7.2. sometimes to works of mercy, but here it is used as an argument to stir up people to prepare their hearts for the hearing of the Word with care and

conſcience. For if it be your care to fit your ſelves for the Word, and to ſettle it in your heats, and practiſe it in your lives, God will then meaſure the ſame back unto you by his bleſſing of the Word, to the ſalvation and edification of your ſouls: whereas the neglect of this duty is a great cauſe why the Word is not ſo ſucceſful now as it was formerly.

The ſecond Sermon.

MATTHEVV 11. 12.

And from the dayes of John *the Baptiſt until now, the Kingdom of heaven ſuffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.*

THe doctrinal part being finiſhed, I now come to application.

And this Doctrine may be uſeful in five reſpects. 1 For reproof. 2 For comfort. 3 For inſtruction. 4 For caution. 5 To ſtir up our lamentation.

Uſe 1. 1 This will reprove ſeveral ſorts of perſons. Out of this Quiver I may draw ten arrows of reproof, that may pierce into the hearts of ten ſeveral ſorts of men.

Reproof 1. 1 It reproves thoſe who are violent in the wayes of ſin, that put forth themſelves to the utmoſt, and draw out their ſtrength in wayes of wickedneſs: that like thoſe in Jerem. 8. 6. *That turn to their courſe, as the horſe ruſheth into the battel*; as an horſe that is ſo fierce in the war, that he ruſheth into it without fear of danger: So the Spirit of God ſetteth forth the wickedneſs of mens hearts; by nature they ruſh into ſin, not conſidering what they do, as the horſe. See what *Iob* ſaith concerning the horſe, *Iob* 39 19. *Haſt thou given the horſe ſtrength? Haſt thou cloathed his neck with thunder? Verſe* 20. *Canſt thou make him afraid as a Graſ-*

Jer. 8. 6.

Graſs-hopper? the glory of his noſthrils is terrible. Verſe 21. *He paweth in the valley, and rejoyceth in his ſtrength, he goeth on to meet the armed men. Verſe* 22. *He mocketh at fear, and is not affrighted, neither turneth he back from the ſword.* Verſe 25. *He ſaith among the trumpets, Aha, Aha, and he ſmelleth the battel afar off, the thunder of the Captains and ſhooting.* Even in this manner do wicked men ruſh into wickedneſs; no fear, nor wit can reſtrain them; no dangers, nor threatnings either from God or man can keep them in, Jerem. 2. 23. *They are as a ſwift Dromedary, traverſing her ways. Their courſe is evil, and their force is not right.* Jerem. 23. 10. *Their hearts are fully ſet in them to do evil,* Eccleſ. 8. 11. *They weary themſelves to commit iniquity,* Jerem. 9. 5. *The people labour in the fire, and weary themſelves for very vanity,* Habak. 2. 13. *They ſleep not except they have done miſchief, and their ſleep is taken away, except they cauſe ſome to fall,* Prov. 4. 16.

Jer. 2. 23.
Eccleſ. 8. 11.
Hab. 2. 13.
Prov. 4. 16.

2 This reproves thoſe that inſtead of an holy violence are guilty of tumultuous violence, that by force and power diſturbe humane ſocieties, deſtroying Laws and Government, that do as *Antiochus* did, *Dan.* 7. 25. *He ſpoke great words againſt the moſt High, and wore out the Saints of the moſt High, and thought to change times and laws.*

Dan. 7. 25.

3 This reproves thoſe that inſtead of an holy violence, are guilty of oppreſſing violence, which is the ſin chiefly of rich men, *Micah* 6. 12. *For the rich men thereof are full of violence. It is they that grinde the faces of the poor,* Micah 2. 2. *They covet fields and take them by violence, and houſes, and take them away, and ſo they oppreſs a man and his houſe,* Amos 3. 10. *They know not to do right, who ſtore up violence and robbery in their palaces,* Prov. 4. 17. *They eat the bread of wickedneſs, and drink the wine of violence*

Micah 6. 12.
Micah 2. 2.
Amos 3. 10.
Prov. 4. 17.

4 This reproves thoſe who are eager and violent in their purſuits after the things of this life, but not ſo after ſpiritual things; we are all upon the ſpur, all upon the wing after the world, here is violence upon violence, labour upon labour for theſe things which we may have, & yet be never the better; & want them, and yet be never the worſe. Covetous men are ſaid to *pant after the duſt of the earth.* So eager are they in their purſuit after the world, as if they were almoſt out of breath, *Pſal* 59. 6,

Amos 2. 7.
Pſal. 59. 6, 14.

14. *They return at evening, they make a noise like a dog, and go about the city.* No creature is so sensible of hunger as a dog. Covetous men are like dogs towards the world, as if they were made up all of desires, but towards the things of eternity, we are as if we were all Stoicks, and had no passions in us. As hot as fire for earth, and as cold as any ice for heaven. Oh how many pant after the earth, who have no breathing after heaven!

Ferventissimi in terrenis, frigidissimi in cœlestibus.

5 This reproves those who are violent opposers of the Gospel: As the former may be called a worldly violence, so this may be called a persecuting violence. Such was the violence of *Paul* before his conversion, *Acts* 26.11. *I punished them oft in every Synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme, and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange Cities.* The Scribes and Pharisees are said to be *filled with madness* against Christ, after the miracle was wrought in curing the man with the *withered hand, Luke* 6.11. There are some that understand my text of this persecuting violence. This is called *a rage reaching up to heaven, 2 Chron.* 28.9.

Acts 26.11.

Luke 6.11.

2 Chron. 28.9.

6 This reproves such, who account an holy zeal and violence in the wayes of Religion to be onely a furious frenzie. Such were they, *Acts* 2.13. that said, *These men are filled with new wine,* when the Apostles were zealous in the preaching of the Gospel. Such were the friends of Christ, when he was zealous and fervent in the doing of his Fathers will, and so intent upon it that he had no leasure to eat his meat, *They went to lay hold of him, for they said, He is beside himself, Mark* 3.21. The like censure did *Festus* pass on *Paul*, when he was zealous to win men to the Gospel; he said, *Thou art beside thy self, much learning doth make thee mad, Acts* 26.24. *Basil*, when he was passionately eager against the Arrian Heresie, it was interpreted a symptome of his dotage. If men will not be baffled out of their Religion, Reformation, &c. they are esteemed but furious Zealots, men of violent spirits. Thus it fared with zealous *Paul*, 2 *Cor.* 5.13. *Whether we are beside our selves, it is to God, or whether we be sober, it is for your cause.*

Acts 2.13.

Mark 3.21.

Acts 26.24.

2 Cor. 5.13.

7 This reproves those who were once violent and zealous in Religion, but now their zeal is abated. We have a Proverb: *Nothing that is violent is durable*; if the violent motion proceeds from

Nullum violentum est perpetuum.

from ſome external artificial cauſe, and not from a rooted ſtirring principle within. Many that go in the wayes of God meerly from an external principle, it may be credit or profit, though they may be ſeemingly violent for a time, yet their violence will not laſt, they will not be ſtedfaſt in the wayes of Religion, and in a Chriſtian courſe. Some who have flouriſhed in the Spring have had a withering time, their fruit decayed, as the leaves fall off in Autumne. It may be ſaid of many in regard of their ſouls, as it was ſaid of *David* in regard of his body: *When he was old, and ſtricken in years, they covered him with cloaths, and he gat no heat*, 1 *King*. 1. 1. Many, though they are plied with ordinances, can get no heat in them. *Auguſtine* obſerves it of many in his dayes, that would at their firſt converſion pray frequently and live holily, but after a while they would grow more remiſſe, and pray more coldly and ſlightly then they did before. There are few of whom after a long profeſſion of religion it can be ſaid, as was ſaid of *Moſes*, *Deut.* 34. 7. *His eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated.* Many are like *Aſa*, their end is worſe then their beginning. 1 Kings 1. 1. Deut. 34. 7.

8 This reproves thoſe that content themſelves with moderation in the matters of Religion, that account a dram of zeal enough for a talent of diſcretion, as Maſter *Greenham* ſaid. Many men are of opinion, that Religion is dangerous, and that an holy violence in Religion is attended with troubles and dangers, and therefore it is beſt to be moderate in Religion. There are many of theſe men in our dayes, otherwiſe Religion had never come to ſo low an ebb as now it is. It was the ſaying of one, that men may be religious, but then they muſt not be too zealous: they muſt not be too violent for the wayes of God, for then they are called men of hot and furious ſpirits; Men (it ſeems) muſt not love Religion too much. *Amama* quotes *Tarnovius*, who mentions a ſort of men that brought in an opinion, which he calls a new Goſpel, that if a man perform the external duties of Religion, if he go to the Church, hear the Word, Pray, &c. it was ſufficient for ſalvation. Of this temper *Gallio* was, *Acts* 18. 17. *Gallio cared for none of thoſe things.* A little Religion will ſerve the turn. Moſt of the Statiſts and Politicians of this World are of this temper, which God will one day account a Laodicean Acts 18. 17.

an lukewarmneſs, or timerous cowardize. Geographers, who write of the ſituation of *England*, ſay, that it is between the Torrid and Frigid Zone, neither hot nor cold; I wiſh our hearts were not like our land.

9 This reproves thoſe that expreſs more violence outwardly then they have inwardly.

There are many men that will hear Sermons on Lords dayes, and Lectures on week-dayes, ſpeak well of Religion, and of the wayes and people of God, but if you look to them in their families, and in their cloſets, you ſhall finde them of another temper. Theſe men are like Pepper, hot in the mouth, but cold in the ſtomack. I may reſemble ſuch to a pot boiling over the fire, hot at the top, cold at the bottom. So ſome men are boiling hot in the mouth, but their hearts are cold and frozen. As it is with men ſick of a Feaver, the face and hands and other external parts of the body burn, when the heart ſhakes and quivers with cold.

10 This reproves thoſe who all their life remain dull and ſluggiſh in Religion, that like Carriers horſes keep their ordinary pace, they will not go beyond their baiting place, they are like Dromedaries, ſwift in the wayes of ſin, but like the dull Aſs ſlow in the wayes of God. The firſtling of other beaſts was to be offered to God, but not the firſtling of an Aſs, *Exod.* 13.13. Exod.13.13. *And every firſtling of an Aſs thou ſhalt redeem with a Lamb, and if thou wilt not redeem it, thou ſhalt break its neck*; to note that of ſluggiſh and dull hearts, the very beſt ſervices are not acceptable to God. The Snail is reckoned among the unclean creatures, *Levit.* 11.30. Levit.11.30. Thoſe hearts that are of this dull conſtitution, are impure and odious in the ſight of God. And thus much ſhall ſerve by way of reproof.

Uſe 2. For comfort. 1 To Miniſters for three Reaſons. Ezek.3.19. Acts 20.26.

2 This Doctrine is uſeful for comfort; and that, 1 To Miniſters. 2 To hearers.

1 To Miniſters; and that for three Reaſons.

1 Though here is matter of trouble, yet no fear of guilt, if thou diſcharge thy duty faithfully, though not ſucceſsfully. *Ezek.* 3.19. *If thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedneſs, nor from his wicked way, he ſhall die in his iniquity, but thou haſt delivered thy ſoul. Acts* 20.26. when *Paul* had uſed his utmoſt

moſt endeavours at *Epheſus*, he vindicates himſelf thus; *I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men.* *Acts* 18.6. when *Paul* preached to the Jews, and they would not obey the Goſpel, *He ſhook his raiment, and ſaid unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads, I am clean: from henceforth I will go to the Gentiles.* Though a Miniſter doth all his dayes plough the rocks, and ſowe the ſands, and ſpend his ſtrength in vain, yet this will bring no guilt upon a Miniſters conſcience: for though it be the Miniſters duty to preach the Word, yet it is Gods work to convert the ſoul. Acts 18.6.

2 God rewards Miniſters according to their labour, not ſucceſs, 2 *Cor.*2.15. *For we are unto God a ſweet ſavour of Chriſt in them that are ſaved, and in them that periſh.* 2 Cor.2.15.

The father pays the Nurſe, though the childe die. The Apothecaries bill muſt be paid, though the patient die: So God will reward Miniſters, though ſucceſs be not anſwerable to their endeavours, *Iſa.*49.4. *Then I ſaid, I have laboured in vain, and ſpent my ſtrength for nought and in vain, yet ſurely my judgement is with the Lord, and my work with my God*; or the reward of my work. Iſa.49.4.

3 The Word may live in the hearers hearts when the Miniſter is dead, *John* 4.36,37. *He that reapeth, receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal, that both he that ſoweth, and he that reapeth may rejoyce together.* And herein is that ſaying true, *One ſoweth, another reapeth.* As a wicked man doth hurt after his death, ſo a good man doth good, 2 *Kings* 23.15. *Jerobeams* wickedneſs proved a ſnare to *Iſrael* in the dayes of *Joſiah*, which was 360 years after his death. And *Davids* example did good on *Joſiah* 400 years after, 2 *Kings* 22.2. *Joſiah did that which was right in the ſight of the Lord, and walked in all the wayes of* David *his father.* John 4.36,37. 2 Kings 23.15. 2 Kings 22.2.

2 As here is comfort for Miniſters, ſo alſo here is comfort to hearers, and that for three Reaſons. Comforts to hearers for three Reaſons.

1 God never expected all ſhould attein the ſame meaſure of grace. Although, *Luke* 8.8. the ſeed that fell in good ground is ſaid to bear an hundred fold, yet, *Matth.*13.23. the grounds differed, *and ſome brought forth but ſixty, ſome but thirty* Chriſt hath Lambs in his fold as well as ſheep, Babes in his houſe as well as ſtrong men. Luke 8.8. Matth.13.23.

2 It may be what is wanting in a sudden and short violence, is made up in solidity. Oakes grow not so fast as the Willow-trees, but they grow more solidly.

3 God will cherish the smallest beginnings of good in the hearts of his people, Cant. 7.12. *Let us go up early to the Vineyards, let us see if the Vine flourish, whether the tender Grape appear, the Pomegranates bud forth, there will I give thee my loves.* The Lord Jesus took notice not onely of the strong and grown Grapes, but also of the tender Grapes, not onely of the fruit, but of the buddings. The very buddings of grace are accepted. And how should this comfort weak Christians, and incourage them to increase with the increase of God, and to get more of this holy violence in heavenly things? *Matth.* 12.20. *A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoaking flax he will not quench, till he send forth judgement into victory.* He speaks there of new converts holy desires, and gracious resolutions in a poor soul; though they do but smoak, and not burn, yet Jesus Christ will not quench them till he have brought forth judgement to victory, by which he means, till they come to be perfect men and women in Christ Jesus.

Cant. 7.12.

The third Sermon.

MATTHEW 11.12.

And from the dayes of John *the Baptist until now, the Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.*

Use 3. Instruction.

IN the third place, this doctrine may serve for instruction touching several things.

1 The nature of this holy violence.

2 The necessity of it.

3 The discovery of it.

The

4 The differences betwixt an heady and holy violence.

Quest. 1. If you ask, what is the nature of this holy violence?

1 What is the nature of this violence.

I answer, 1 It is a full and vehement bent of a mans desires, affections, and endeavours after Jesus Christ in the Gospel; so that no difficulties or discouragements whatsoever shall take him off from his pursuit after Christ, in the way of his Ordinances.

2 The necessity of it.

2 For the necessity of it, that appears in five regards: 1 In regard of God. 2 In regard of our selves. 3 In respect of the Devil. 4 In respect of other men. 5 In respect of Heaven it self.

1 In regard of God.

1 In regard of God, *Eccles.* 9.10. *Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might.* God requires this at your hands, *Rom.* 12.11. *Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.* The word signifies boiling in spirit.

Rom. 12.11. τῷ πνεύματι ζέοντες. *boiling in spirit.*

2 In respect of our selves.

2 In regard of our selves, and that for two Reasons.

1 We have violent temptations against us, our affections must be equal to our temptations; if our affections be not violent, how can we resist violent temptations? Shall not we be as violent to save our souls as the Devil is to damne them? Satan invades the soul with fierce and furious assaults.

2 We have been violent in the wayes of sin. Shew as much violence in the wayes of God, as you can, and when you have done all, it will come short of your former violence in the ways of sin, *Rom.* 6.19. *As ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness, & to iniquity unto iniquity: even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.* There are three *To's* in the expression of the service of sin, to uncleanness, to iniquity, and unto iniquity, but in the service of God there are onely two *To's*, to righteousness, and unto holiness. To note that we were more addicted to sin formerly, then now we are to grace; the reason is, then there was nothing but sin in the soul, now there is something else besides grace, a stream of corruption to oppose it. We ought to be as violent in good as in evil: the same word which signifies to persecute, *Acts* 26.11. is used to set out his earnest pressing towards Heaven, *Phil.* 3.14.

Rom. 6.19.

Acts 26.11. διώκω

Phil. 3.14.

3 In respect of the Devil.

3 In regard of the Devil, He hath violent temptations and sug-

1 Pet. 5. 8. suggestions, 1 *Pet.* 5. 8. *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the Devil as a roaring Lion walketh about seeking whom he may devour.* 1 He is said to be an adversary. Now an adversary will watch all opportunities for your hurt, and will be intently set upon it. 2 He is a Lion, not a Lambe; a Lion, a savage, fierce, and furious creature. 3 He is not asleep, but a roaring Lion. 4 Not a Lion standing still, contented with the prey when he hath gotten it, but still going about for more: he is not contented with what he hath gotten, though he hath been going about ever since *Adams* fall, yet he goes about still for more, he labours to fill hell with souls. 5 He seeks whom he may devour. The Devil watcheth, and doest thou sleep?

Vigilat diabolus, & tu dormis?

4 In regard of other men, and those either bad or good.

In respect of other men;

1 In regard of bad men.

1 Bad men.

1 Consider, they are violent against the truth, and wilt not thou be as eager and violent in the profession of the Gospel, as they are in their oppositions against it? As *Zeno* said to one of his acquaintance, who was enticed to bear false witness against another, and walked privately, because he would avoid the man that sought to suborn him. Oh, said *Zeno*, Shall he not be ashamed of sin, and wilt thou be ashamed to set thy self against sin?

2 Bad men rage and are violent in wayes of wickedness: Wicked men are as swift as Dromedaries in the wayes of sin, and wilt thou be as a dull Ass in the service of God? shall a man run fast in a way of sin to destroy his soul, and will you but creep in the wayes of God to save your soul? shall wicked men run post to hell, and wilt thou but creep slowly to Heaven? Shall a man make speed to the place of execution, and wilt thou but move slowly towards a crown and throne? Shall wicked men not be ashamed to shew their rage in a sinful course, and shall godly men be ashamed to be zealous in the wayes of God? *Jer* 8 6. They turn to their course as the horse rusheth into the battel, *Jer.* 9. 5. They weary themselves to commit iniquity, and will not you do as much for God as they do for Satan?

Jerem. 8. 6. שטף *irruit more inundantis aquæ.*

2 In regard of good men.

2 In regard of good men. How eager and earnest are they after

after God? *Caleb* and *Joshua* followed God fully, *Numb.* 14.24. when hypocrites follow God partially and by halves. *Psal.* 132. 4,5. *David* was so violent for God, that *he would give no sleepe to his eyes, nor slumber to his eye-lids, untill he found out a place for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob.* As on the contrary, those wicked men, *Prov.* 4.16. were so violent in wickednesse, that *they could not sleepe except they caused some to fall.* Psal. 69.9. *The zeal of thy house hath eaten me up, and the reproaches of them that reproached thee, fell upon me.*

Numb. 14.24. וימלא אחרי *Implevit ire post me,* He went after me with full sail.

5 In respect of heaven it selfe, *Luke* 13. 24. *Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, will seeke to enter in, and shall not be able.* Strive to an agonie, or as in an agony men strive for life: it is not enough to seek; many seekers shall never finde, but there must be striving; there must be a kinde of holy impatiencie to get into heaven, 1 *Cor.* 9. 24,25. *Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize: So run that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible Crown, but we an incorruptible.* 2 Tim. 2.5. *And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned except he strive lawfully.* Heaven is compared to a hil, and hel to a pit. It wil cost a man sweat & labour to get up an hil; but it is an easie thing to go down into a pit. Heaven is as Canaan (the type of it) was, though a land of promise, yet of conquest too. There were many Giants there, the sons of *Anak* in the land. Heaven is not had without eagernesse, *Luke* 16. 16 *Every man presseth into it.* It is an allusion to Souldiers that storm a City or strong Garrison, with all the speed and violence they can. Should Souldiers go about that great work in a marching place, they might all be cut off. And thus much shall suffice for the second thing, to shew the necessity of this holy violence.

5 In regard of Heaven it self. ἀγωνίζεσθε, *more pugilum certate.*

1 Cor. 9.24,25.

2 Tim. 2.5. *Facilis descensus Averni.* Virgil.

βιάζεται. Paræus.

The third thing is the discovery of this holy violence.

3 The discovery of this violence.

Now it is discovered by these following marks. A violent or zealous person is one,

1 Who is patient in his own cause, but impatient in Gods cause. This was the temper of *David.* What the enemies did to *David* was but as a pin in the flesh, but what they did against

God was as a sword in his bones. *Psal.* 42.10. *As with a sword in my bones mine enemies reproached me, whilest they say daily unto me, Where is thy God?* the reproaching of God was as death to him, as though he had been slain by it, *as slaying in my bones.*

ברצח בעצמותי Numb.12.3.

Moses was a man very meek in his own wrongs, *Numb.*12.3. Moses *was very meek above all the men that were upon the face of the earth*; but in the cause of God, *Exod.*32. he carried himself as if he had been a man made up all of passion, he broke the tables of stone. So Jesus Christ was famous for his gentleness, he was a Lambe for meekness, and yet in the cause of his Father, he applied that to himself; *The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up, John* 2.17.

Exod.32.

John 2.17.

2 He never thinkes that he began to serve God soon enough, or did him worke enough, *Psalme* 63.1. *Early will I seek thee*, and *Verse* 8. *My soul followeth hard after God. Acts* 13.22. God gave *David* this testimony, and said, I have found *David* the son of *Jesse*, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will. *Psal.*119.6. *Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect to all thy Commandements.*

Psal.63.1.

Acts 13.22.

Psal.119.6.

3 He is desirous to glorifie God by suffering as well as by doing, *to follow the Lambe whithersoevrr he goes*; to the Wilderness, as well as to Paradise; to a Prison, as well as to a Palace, *Jer.*2.2. *I remember the kindness of thy youth,——when thou wentest after me in a land that was not sown.* Cant.8.5. *Who is this that commeth up from the Wilderness, leaning upon her beloved,* from the Wilderness of afflictions? *Matth.*8.19. *A certain Scribe came to him, and said, Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.* He would follow Christ in doing, but not in suffering, as cloth doth last in wearing, but shrink in wetting; for when Christ told him, *The foxes have holes, the birds of the air nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head, Verse* 20. his courage was abated.

Jerem.2.2. Cant.8.5.

Matth.8.19.

4 He looks more after duty then reward, and complains more of his defects in it, then for want of expected returns to it. Many men are content to follow God, so long as there is any advantage in so doing; they will do their duty, but they do not care for duty, but upon expectation of rewards. Remiss spirits follow God as a Dog doth his master, till he comes by a carrion,

rion, then he leaves his master, and turns aside to it: So wicked men follow God till they come at a carrion, till they meet with some stinking lust, some occasion or object of sin, but then they depart from God, and close with it. But on the contrary *David* followed after God, and thirsted for God even then when he was *in a dry and thirsty land, where no water was*, *Psal.*63.1. Had we been in *Davids* case, we should have said, O Lord, give me drink; had we been a barren land, we should have said, O Lord, give me food: but *David* in a barren and thirsty land cries, O Lord, give me thy self. That is the spirit of a man that is truly zealous after the Gospel. Psal.63.1.

5 Difficulties and opposition do rather quicken then abase his endeavours; What adventures will he not make? What pains will he not take? What hazards will he not run for God? And as it is with the fire in the Smiths forge that grows hotter and more violent when the water is sprinkled upon it, or as fire burns the most vehemently in a cold and frosty day: So that opposition that is made against a zealous man, doth but make it the more eager and fervent by a holy *Antiperistasis*. Thus it was in the dayes of Christ, the harder it was to get to him, the more violent and restless were they till they came to him. *They trod one upon another, being an innumerable multitude of people*, *Luke* 12.1. Some forced their passage to Christ (as we say hunger doth to meat) through stone walls, *Mark* 2.4. *And when they could not come nigh unto Christ for the preass, they uncovered the roof where he was, and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed, &c.* Such was the temper of that Syrophenician, whose zeal was not quenched but increased by opposition, though even Christ did set himself against her as an adversary; When Christ said, *It is not meet to take the childrens bread and give it to dogs*, *Mark* 7.27. Here is cold water (one would think) enough to quench the zeal of many a professour, but the fire of her zeal made fuel of this cooling expression; *She answered, Yet the dogs under the table eat of the childrens crumbs*, *Verse* 28. One compares a violent Christian to a Burr, the more pains you take to get it off, it sticks the faster on: So a zealous Christian, the more you endeavour to pull him from God, he cleaves the closer to him. This was *Davids* disposition, when he danced before the Luke 12.1. Mark 2.4. Mark 7.27. Verse 28.

the Lord, when *Michal* despised him, and reproved him, and fell foul upon him for it; he answers; *I will yet be more vile then thus, and will be base in mine own sight, for it was before the Lord,* 2 *Sam.*6.21,22. And thus much for the third particular, the discovery of this holy violence. I now come to the fourth.

2 Sam.6.21.22.

4 The difference between a rash and a holy violence.

The fourth particular is the difference betwixt an heady and rash, and an holy and religious violence. Now I shall shew that in ten particulars.

1 It is most seen in trivial and circumstantial matters. Such was the violence of the Pharisees, about washing their vessels and their hands before meat, but they never lookt after the washing of the heart. So the Prelatical party shewed much heat and violence about ceremonies, whereas they were lukewarm, yea cold in more substantial mattters, the observation of the Sabbath, and the strict exercise of holinesse, &c. They were very violent for the linnen Ephod, though it may be there was a leprous skin under it; they took great care to have railes about the Communion-table, but never took care to make a rail to keep prophane persons from the prophanation of the Sacrament; but now a godly man is most conversant about that which may be most advantagious to him, which will bring him neerest heaven, which will be of most use to him to glorifie God, and to save his soul.

2 It is kindled by passion and vain glory in the one, by a zeal and holy indignation in the other. Thus many men are zealous in the broaching of errours; when they cannot get glory by holding the truth, then they will give up themselves to vent errours. Whereas true violence comes from a better principle, and aimes at an higher end. The fire of the Altar was to come from heaven, *Levit.*9.24. And when *Nadab* and *Abihu* offered sacrifice with strange fire, it was not accepted, nay they were slain in their enterprize. Our zeal should be a fire from Heaven. God accounts that strange fire we fetch from our own hearts.

Levit.9.24.

3 Violent rash zeal makes a man go beyond the bounds of his place and calling. *Samuel* reproved *Saul* for his heady violence, 1 *Sam.*13.13. When *Saul* had taken upon him to offer sacrifice, *Samuel* said, *Thou hast done foolishly.* Yet *Saul* pleaded a fair

1 Sam.13.13.

fair excuſe, *verſe* 11, 12. *Saul* ſaid, *Becauſe I ſaw that the people were ſcattered from me, and thou cameſt not within the dayes appointed and that the Philiſtines gathered themſelves together to Michmaſh, therefore ſaid I, The Philiſtines will come down now upon me to Gilgal, and I have not made ſupplication unto the Lord. I forced my ſelf therefore, and offered a burnt-offering.* Verſe 11, 12.

You ſee *Saul* had much to ſay, yet all would not ſerve to juſtifie his invaſion into the Prieſts office. Such was the violence of *Peter*, *Matth.26.51.* *He ſtretched out his hand, and drew his ſword, and ſtrook a ſervant of the High Prieſt; and ſmote off his ear.* But an holy violence makes a man zealous in his place. A zealous Magiſtrate will ſeverely puniſh ſin, let other Juſtices indulge it. A zealous Miniſter will be faithful and fervent in the reproving of ſin, though others prove dumb dogs, or flattereres that ſowe pillowes under mens elbowes. So a zealous maſter of a family reſolves with good *Joſhua*, *That he and his houſe will ſerve the Lord*, *Joſh.*24.15. whatever other maſters and other families do. Fire in its place is good and uſeful, but out of its place how hurtfull and deſtructive? Matth.26.51. Joſhua 24.15.

The fourth Sermon.

MATTHEW 11.12.

And from the dayes of John *the Baptiſt until now, the Kingdom of Heaven ſuffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.*

AN heady violence is more eager at firſt then at the latter end. This difference the Philoſopher puts between natural and violent motions, that natural motions are ſlow at the beginning, but ſwifter when they come neereſt their journies end; as a falling ſtone movesvery ſlow when it firſt begins to fall, but faſter when it comes neerer its

its centre. On the contrary, violent motions are swifter in the beginning, slower in the conclusion. As an arrow shot out of a Bowe moves exceeding swiftly at the first, but afterwards flags and grows remiss, until at last the motion of it cease. An heady violence is like the violent motion, swift at first, slow afterward: But contrarily an holy violence is like a natural motion, that acts with more vigour in the end then in the beginning. This was the commendation of the Church of *Thyatira*, *That her last works were more then her first*, *Revel.*2.19.

5 Heady violence will be discouraged in Religion by small difficulties. Such was the violence of that man fore-mentioned, that was earnest to come to Christ, but when Christ told him, *The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head*, *Matth.*8.20. his zeal was abated. But an holy violence is quickened, not abated by opposition, *Job* 32.19. *Behold, my belly is as wine which hath no vent, it is ready to burst like new bottles.*

Matth.8.20.

Job 32.19.

6 An heady violence is led more by example then rule; like that violence of the people of *Ephesus* for *Diana*, *Acts* 19.32. Some cried one thing, and some another, and the most part knew not wherefore they were come together. Such was the violence of the Scribes and Pharisees, *John* 7.47,48,49. *Then answered him the Pharisees, Are you also deceived? Have any of the Rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him? But this people who know not the Law, are cursed.* But an holy violence is led by Scripture-rule, not by popular example. The Word was the rule that guided *Joshua* to that resolution, *That he and his house would serve the Lord.*

Acts 19.32.

7 One that hath this heady violence is most busied with controversials and circumstantials in Religion. Thus *Saul* was violent against the eating of the blood of the sacrifices, yet made no conscience of shedding the blood of fourscore and five of the Priests of the Lord: But an holy violence makes a man conversant in the practicals of Christianity, *Tit.* 2.14. *The people of God are a people zealous of good works.* There was less of the power of Religion in those times wherein the Schoolmen most flourished, and the heat of mens spirits was spent in curious and frivolous speculations; while they that should have instructed the

Titus 2.14.

the people turn'd disputāts, the poor multitude became Atheists. It was an heady violēce betwixt the Eastern & Western Churches touching the time of the observation of *Easter*, when many other truths of God that lay a bleeding were neglected, & they did not contend earnestly for many of the doctrines of faith that was once delivered to the Saints. So many men among us spend all their time about notions & disputes, & this hath proved a very canker to eat out the power of godliness. In the City of *Megara* there was a great contention between two men, which of them should stand in the shadow of an ass upon a Sunshine day. Such was the violence of *Paul* before his conversion, *Gal.* 1.14. *He was exceedingly zealous for the traditions of his fathers.* Gal.1.14.

8 An heady violence is an uneven violence, there is no uniformity in it; it is a violence against some sins, not all; it is for some duties not others; to act some graces, but not all. Such was the violence of *Jehu*. He was very hot and violent against the Priests and worship of *Baal*, 2 *Kings* 10.28. *Jehu* destroyed *Baal* out of *Israel*: *But Jehu departed not from the sins of Jeroboam, which made Israel to sin, verse* 31. Such was the violence of *Saul* for sacrifice, but not for obedience. But now an holy violence is uniform, it carries a man out against every sin, for every duty, it makes a man to walk in all the commandments of God. 2 Kings 10.28. Verse 31.

9 This heady violence will make a man disturb humane societies & civil government, anticipate authority: But an holy violence, though violent towards God, yet is quiet & peaceable towards men; though he pursue heaven with violence, yet he lives in the earth with meekness & quietness. Those ancient hereticks were such as did *despise government, presumptuous, self-willed, and were not afraid to speak evill of dignities. But the wisdome that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easie to be intreated, &c.* 2 Pet.2.10. James 3.17.

10 Heady violence is accompanied with stoutnesse of heart both towards God and men, it proceeds from a natural rashnes: But holy violence is accompanied with humiliation, *Revel.* 3.19. The Church of Laodicea is commanded to be zealous, and repent. Their zeal for God must be joyned with the breaking of their own hearts. So the zeal of the Corinthians, 2 *Cor.* 7.11. was accompanied with a godly sorrow, with fear, with indignation against themselves, with revenge. And thus much Revel.3.19. 2 Cor.7.11.

shall suffice for the fourth particular, and last branch of the Use of instruction; namely, the difference between heady and holy violence. And so much for the third Use.

Use 4. For caution in four things.

4 The fourth Use is for caution, and that in four particulars. 1 Take heed of pleading for, or being contented with a moderation in matters of Religion. Moderation in Religion is accounted a vertue in these times, whereas Jesus Christ would have spued us out of his mouth. If Jesus Christ commend an holy violence in the matters of Religion, what becomes of this moderation? Indeed, for men to be moderate in things that are lawful is good. It is the advice of the Apostle, *Phil.*4.5. *Let your moderation be known unto all men; the Lord is at hand:* that is, let your moderation be in the love and desire of things lawful and indifferent, of things in this World; be moderate in those things, that they may not hinder you in your course towards Heaven, but not in any case to be moderate in Religion; and that I shall make appear in these four particulars.

Phil.4.5.

1 Moderate estates do not content you in the World. *Men rise up early, and go to bed late, and eat the bread of carefulness,* and are eager and indefatigable in their pursuits of the World. If you get not so much this yeer, you will endeavour to get more the next yeer; no man hath moderation after the things of this World, no man is contented with that estate they are in, but labours to improve it. Like the Chaldeans, of whom it is spoken, *Habak.*2.5. *He inlargeth his desire as hell, and is as death, and cannot be satisfied: But gathereth unto him all Nations, and heapeth unto him all people.* And is it reason that you that are so immoderate in the pursuit and desire of the things of this World, should be moderate in the things of Heaven?

Habak.2.5.

2 You have been very immoderate in your desires after your lusts before your conversion, and therefore in all reason you should not now be moderate in your desires after God, and the things of God. How many times have you been as it were sick till you have accomplisht your ends in a sinful course, and will you not now be sick of love after Christ, and after heavenly things? Hast thou not burnt in lust, and wilt thou now be key-cold in Religion?

3 God doth express as great, yea, more dislike of luke-warm-

warmnes in Religion, as if a man were of no Religion. Famous is that instance of *Laodicea*, *Revel.* 3.15,16. *I would thou wert either cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.* Not that God would have men to continue in, or return to Paganisme or Judaisme, both of which his soul abhors; but onely because he doth exceedinglydistaste lukewarmnes in the profession of Christianity.

4 In a false Religion men have shewed much zeal and forwardnes, *Isa.* 46.6. *They lavish gold out of the bag, and weigh silver in the balance, and hire a Goldsmith, and he maketh it a god, they fall down, yea, they worship, &c.* The people were so violent in an Idolatrous Religion, that they did spare no cost nor pains to accomplish it. So those false Prophets and Worshippers of *Baal*, 1 *Kings* 18.28. *They cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancers till the blood gushed out upon them.* So *Paul* when he was a Jew and adversary to Christianity, *beyond measure he persecuted the Church of God, and wasted it*, *Gal.* 1.13. *Jeremy* 32.35. Those superstitious Jews *built the high places of* Baal, *which are in the Valley of the son of* Hinnom, *to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire unto* Moloch, *which I commanded them not.* So zealous and fervent were they in their Idolatrous worship and service, that they would cause their children to be burnt as a sacrifice to their false god. So likewise among us the Papists are zealous and eager for their worship, witnes their Whippings and Scourgings and Fastings, and other Penances. If men be thus zealous in false wayes, how fervent should we be in a true? But so much for the first branch of the Caution.

Isa. 46.6. 1 Kings 18.28.

שפך Notes to gush out, or poure out swiftly and plentifully.

Gal. 1.13. Jer. 32.35.

2 Take heed you do not think you shall ever go to Heaven without this holy zeal and violence. It was onely the violent in *John* Baptists dayes that took Heaven. You can never go to Heaven except you strive to enter in at the strait gate. You must strive till you sweat, you must strive with all your might, and all will be little enough. Take heed therefore you do not think it an easie thing to go to heaven. But withall take this, though you cannot go to heaven without this holy violence, you shall never go to heaven for it. *James* 1.25. *Whosoever looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a*

Caution 2.

James 1.25.

forgetfull hearer of the Word, but a doer also, this man shall be blessed in his deed. So that you see a man shall not go to heaven for his doing, though he cannot go to heaven without it.

Caut. 3. 3. When you see the Servants of God zealous and violent in the wayes of God, take heed you do not judge of this as the world doth, that you do not judge it a vain and needlesse thing, or that you do not judge it folly and madnesse. When *Paul* was thus violent for the propagation of the Gospel, when he came before *Festus*, *Festus* told him, that much learning had made him mad: But *Paul* said, I am not mad, but speak forth the words of truth and soberness.

Caut. 4. 4 Take heed thou doest not abate thy zeal in the matters of religion, because it may be thou meetest with much reproach and many scandals from the men of the world for the sake of religion. *David* was more eager in his dancing before the Ark, notwithstanding the scoffings of his wife. If scandals and reproaches and troubles will make thee abate thy zeal for God, thou wilt never be able to hold out to the end. I will never believe that man will indure a rack for his religion, that cannot bear a reproach. He that cannot indure a frown for it, will never indure fire and faggot; if thou canst not indure a taunt or jeer for thy profession of religion, much lesse wilt thou indure a Gibbet. And so much for the Use of Caution.

Use 5. For lamentation for the apostasie of our times. The next Use is this: This Doctrine may stirre up in us an holy lamentation: If it were so, that in the dayes of *John* the Baptist men were so holily violent after Jesus Christ and his Ordinances; then how should we lament and bewail our times, when we consider how defective men are now adayes, and how much we fall short of those converts at the first plantation of the Gospel?

We fall short of Primitive Christians in three regards. 1 In love. We fall short of them, 1 In regard of their love and union. It was observed that the primitive Christians were so full of love and affection to one another, that they could be acquainted together as well in half an hour as in half a year. In those times they were so conversant in that duty of love, that St. *Paul* saith, *They needed not that he should write to them concerning love*, 1 *Thess.* 4.9. In those dayes they were of one accord. The very

1 Thes. 4.9.

Heathens

Heathens took notice of it, and said: Behold, how the Christians love one another. But we are fallen into those times wherein the love of men grows cold; we, upon whom the ends of the world are come, bite and teare, and devour one another.

2 In contempt of the World.

2 We come short of them in the contempt of the world. You know how much those Christians, *Hebr.* 11. lived above the world: *They confessed that they were but strangers and pilgrims upon earth, verse* 13. They were not satisfied with the world, but sought after a better Countrey. *They came and laid their wealth at the Apostles feet, to do with it whatsoever he pleased.* For cloathing they were contented with sheeps skins and goats skins; and instead of our stately houses they were satisfied with dens and caves of the earth.

3 We fall short of the primitive Christians herein also, that they were taken off from that form of religion wherein they were born and bred up, and received a new form of religion. Whereas they might have objected, all our fathers were bred up in the law of *Moses*, and shall we take upon us a new way, a new religion? But they did not contend about it, they forsook the rudiments of *Moses*, and imbraced this new way and doctrine, which as they thought was never taught before. But we are more addicted to customes then Scriptures, we chuse rather to follow what hath been then to consider what should be. Many have much reasoning and contention for the old forme of religion. Many are so setled in their old formes and wayes, wherein they were born and bred, that they will not indure or seek for a better form and way. *Heylin* in his Geography reports of the King of *Morocco*, that he told the English Embassadour in King *Johns* time, that he had lately read *Pauls* Epistles, which he liked so well, that were he to chuse his religion, he would imbrace Christianity, but every one ought to die in the faith wherein he was born: So it is with many among us, they are perswaded they ought, and resolved they will live and die in those customes and wayes wherein they were born; they will not deny themselves in these trivial things for the exaltation of Christ; and herein also we fall short of the primitive Christians. And thus much for the last Use. And so I have dispatched the first and maine Doctrine, That in the

the times of the first promulgation of the Gospel greater success did attend the Ministery, and multitudes did come in with more holy violence after the Ordinances then ever they did before.

The fifth Sermon.

MATTHEVV 11. 12.

And from the dayes of John *the Baptist until now, the Kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.*

THere is but one Doctrine behinde, and that is taken from the consideration of the quality of those persons who did express this holy violence; who they were our Saviour himself acquaints us, *Matth.*21. 31. *Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that the Publicans and Harlots go into the Kingdom of God before you. Verse* 32. *The Publicans and harlots believed John.* The Pharisees that led strict lives, had a kinde of legal righteousness, yet they were not the people that did receive Jesus Christ, but Publicans and harlots. *The Pharisees and Lawyers rejected or frustrated the counsel of God against themselves*, or *within themselves, being not baptized of him. But the Publicans justified God, being baptized with the Baptisme of* John, *Luke* 7.29,30. They that used this violence were men that lived by rapine, deceit, exaction, and oppression; so did the Publicans. Whence the Observation is this:

Mat.21.31,32.

Luke 7.29,30.

Doct. 2. That usually those that have been most sinful before conversion, do express the more holy violence and eagerness of affection after Jesus Christ in the Gospel after they are converted. In the handling of this point, I shall do three things.

1 I shall demonstrate the truth of it by Scripture-instances.

2 I shall shew the reasons why God did pitch upon such chiefly: who were most notorious ill-livers.

3 I shall shew why such men are more violent in religion then others

1 I shall demonstrate the truth of the Doctrine by Scripture-instances. I shall give but two instances; the one in *Mary Magdalene*, the other in *Paul*. 1 *Mary Magdalene*, she was an unclean person, a very harlot, a great sinner, but after her conversion she thought nothing too much for Christ. 1 She anointed his feet with a pound of Spikenard that was very costly, worth three hundred pence, that is, worth above nine pound in our money, *John* 12.5. 2 She broke through many difficulties to come to Christ. Christ was in another mans house, (and he *Simon* a Pharisee) *Luke* 7.36,37. and set down to supper. She might have raised an objection, and said, I cannot come at him, and they in the house may think evil of it; but all this could not keep her back. Further, there were more discouragements. Not onely *Judas* but others were angry at her, *Mark* 14.4. *There were some (not onely* Judas, *but others also) that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this waste of the ointment made?* Yea, the Disciples too had indignation at her: *Matth.* 26.8. *The Disciples had indignation.* Yet she came to Christ through all these difficulties, and she wept, *Luke* 7.44. *And that so plentifully, that she washed the feet of Christ with her tears.* Her eyes that had been windows of lust, were now flood-gates of tears.

Proved by example, *Magdalene.*

John 12.5.

Luke 7.36,37.

Mark 14.4.
Matth.26.8.

Luke 7.44.

2 Another instance is that of *Paul*. Before his conversion he was a notorious sinner. He had an hand in the death of that holy man *Stephen*, *Act* 8.1. He was a man that breathed out threatenings and slaughters against the Disciples of the Lord, *Act.* 9.1. He was a blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious, 1 *Tim.*1.13. he cared not what he did to the people of God. Yea further, he did compel others to blaspheme, *Act.*26 11. and being exceedingly mad against them, he persecuted them even to strange Cities. And yet behold, this man that was so eminent a sinner before his conversion, afterward made recompence; he

Acts 8.1.

Acts 9.1.
1 Tim.1.13.

he grew and abounded in grace; he grew as eminent in grace, as he was notorious in sin. As he had hailed men to prison formerly, so now he draws them to Christ. He preached that faith that once he persecuted, *Gal.* 1. 23. So much for the first particular, the proof of the point by Scripture-instances.

Gal. 1. 23.

Quest. Why did God call such vile persons?

The second particular is this: Why did God pitch upon such chiefly, as were most notorious ill-livers?

I answer; Two Reasons may be given of it.

Answ. 1.

1 To beat off the Pharisees from resting in their own righteousness, that they might see that salvation was of grace, and not of works. Had this effect appeared in multitudes of the Scribes and Pharisees, some would have attributed it to their learning, others to their strict and holy walking, and austere conversation, people would have thought they had merited this at Gods hands; and therefore God passed by them, and made choice of others far more unholy and prophane, to knock them off from their own righteousness, and from dependance upon it.

2 It was to magnifie the riches, freeness, and greatness of Gods grace, that was brought in and manifested by the Gospel. God would hereby give to understand that the doctrine of the Gospel was a doctrine of grace (not that men might live as they list, for these vile people were not incouraged in, but redeemed from a vain conversation, but) *Johns* work was a tough and hard work to pull down those that were as high as mountains in pride, as hard as the rocks of those mountains, to make rough and crooked things smooth and straight. And yet all this *John* was to do, all this *John* did in the preparation of the people for Christ, *Isa.* 40. 4. The greater the wound is, the more is the skill and care of the Physician seen and commended. The more and greater the sins are that are pardoned, the more is the grace of God advanced.

So much for the second particular.

Why are such most zealous?

The third particular is this: Why are such vile and sinful persons most eager and violent after their conversion?

Answ. 1.

Answ. 1. This proceeds from an holy indignation against themselves, which is a fruit of repentance or conversion, as you read, 2 *Cor.* 7. 11. *For this self-same thing that ye sorrowed after*

ter a godly sort, what carefulnesse did it work in you? yea, what clearing of your selves? yea what indignation? yea, what fear? yea, what desire? yea, what zeal? yea, what revenge? There ariseth in such a desire to be revenged upon themselves, *Isa.* 30.22. *Ye shall defile also the covering of the graven images of silver, and the ornament of thy molten images of gold, thou shalt cast them away as a menstruous cloth, thou shalt say unto them, Get thee hence, Isa.*2.20. *In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold which they have made, each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats. Cranmer* burned his right hand first, because it had subscribed his recantation, and oftentimes repeated in the flame, Oh this unworthy right hand! An holy indignation makes him to reason thus within himself: Could I sin worse then others, and shall I now be contented with less grace then others? Could I be as swift as a Dromedary in the wayes of sin, and shall I creep like a snail in the wayes of God? Have I been zealous for the committing of sin, and shall I be cold in my motions after Christ? Such persons are ashamed of their former wayes, and therefore they now labour to take off that reproach by making some reparations.

Isa.30.22.

Isa.2.20.

2 This proceeds from that sense that is in such persons of an utter and absolute necessity of getting into Christ. You know a man that hath but cut his finger will not make much ado, but he that hath got a great and dangerous wound sees a necessity of the cure, and that he is a dead man, if he do not get help. So a man that lives in a common way of sinning, he thinks his sins are inconsiderable, he sees no necessity of closing with Christ for cure. But a man that hath been much in sin, and notorious in wickednesse, when God comes and opens his eyes by effectual calling, he sees a necessity of getting help by Jesus Christ, and that if they have not Christ, they are undone for ever, they shall perish eternally.

And thus I have finished the Doctrinal part: I now proceed to make application. And this Doctrine is eminently useful to three sorts of men: 1 To those that have been formerly very vile and great sinners, but are now converted. 2 To meer civil and honest men. 3 To those that yet remain and go on in a sinful course.

Use 1. To great sinners converted

1 To those that have been formerly very great sinners, but are now converted: To them I have two things to say.

1 Labour to follow this pattern that is here propounded in the Gospel, and in this doctrine. Labour to proportion your graces now that you are converted, to the number and greatnes of your sins before conversion. As you have been violent in sin formerly, to see that now you be as violent after the things of heaven. So did *Manasses*, he was a great sinner, he filled *Jerusalem* with blood, he was a gross Idolater, a destroyer of Gods worship, 2 *Chron.* 33.12. And therefore *he humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers.* So *Paul*, because he was a greater sinner then the rest of the Apostles; therefore he laboured more abundantly then they all. If therefore sin hath abounded, see that grace doth abound also. As you have formerly added iniquity unto iniquity, so now see that you add grace to grace. As you have with much eagerness given up the members of your bodies, as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin and uncleanness, so see that you give them up as instruments of righteousness unto holiness. Particularly, see that you do abound. 1 In the grace of humiliation. 2 In the grace of love. 1 In the grace of humiliation; little humiliation is not suitable to great sins. That garment that hath most spots in it, must have most rinsing; that which hath most dust in it, needs the most beating. There must be a *sicut*, not onely *qualitatis*, but *æqualitatis* also, if possibly it can be. There should be some equality between the strength that was put forth in the service of sin, and that we now put forth in the service of God. It is very observable, *Levit.* 11.24,25. *He that toucheth an unclean thing, shall be unclean till even; but he that beareth an unclean thing, shall wash his cloathes, and be unclean till even.* Though a man be but defiled a little with sin, if he doth but touch a sin as it were commit a little sin, he had need be humbled; but those that wallow in sinful courses, and bear sin about them, they must look to be more humbled then others were.

2 Chron. 33.12

Levit. 11,24,25

2 See that you proportion your love to Christ, to your sinfulness against Christ in times past. Hast thou been a great and a vile sinner before conversion, know that a little love to Christ is not answerable to thy great sins. *Luke* 7.47. *Her sins which*

are

are many are forgiven her, therefore she loved much. Jesus Christ expects and requires more love of such to whom he hath pardoned much, then he doth of those to whom little is forgiven. We read in *John* 21.15. Jesus said unto *Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, Lovest thou me more then these?* Jesus Christ did not ask him, *Lovest thou me at all?* nor, Lovest thou me as these? but, Lovest thou me more then these? Thou hast sinned more then these, doest thou love me more then these? Christ expected more love from *Peter* then from the rest of the Disciples. And so *Peter* did return more love to Christ then the rest did. And though the book of the *Acts* be called the *Acts of the Apostles*, yet there is more spoken of *Peter* then of all the rest of the Apostles that had seen Christ in the flesh. *Peter* after his fall did shew more love then the rest. 1 *Peter* preached the first Sermon after Christs Resurrection and Ascension, *Acts* 1.15. 2 *Peter* was the first that went into the Sepulchre after Christs Death and Resurrection. Although *Peter* and *John* did run to the Sepulchre, and *John* outran *Peter*, and came first thither, yet *Peter* first went down into the Sepulchre to see where Christ was laid, *John* 20.6. 3 When Christ after his Resurrection was walking upon the water, *Peter* cast himself into the Sea, to go to meet Jesus, he had no patience to stay till he came at him, *John* 21.7. 4 *Peter* converted more souls to Christ then all the rest of the Apostles did, three thousand souls at one Sermon. 5 *Peter* died for Christ, he was crucified for Christ, and he desired that he might be crucified with his head downward, because he thought it was too much honour for him to die as his Master. So you see that as *Peter* had been more treacherous to his Master then the rest; so *Peter* was more ardent in his love to Christ then the rest. And so you must all learn to see, that as your sins have been more and greater then the sins of other men; so your humiliation must be more, your love must be stronger. That is the first branch of the first Use.

John 21.15.

Acts 1.15.

John 20.6

John 21.7.

2 This may teach you to magnifie the riches and freeness of Gods grace, that God should cast an eye of grace and love upon such a wretch as thou wast; that God should pass by such men as the strict Pharisee, and pitch upon thee: that God

should not make thee as exemplary in punishment as thou wast in sin; that thou shouldest be made a monument of his mercy, who deserved to be a spectacle of wrath; that God should make his mercy to rest upon thee, that might cause his justice to take hold upon thee. So much for the first Use.

Use 2. To civil men.

2 This Doctrine is useful to men of a civil carriage, of an honest and inoffensive behaviour in the World, that have been religiously educated, lived ingenuously, that never broke out into such gross and exorbitant courses as other men have done:

To you I would say three things.

1 Whereas you say, that you are of a more civil life then others, and so you are apt to perswade your selves your case is better then others: Consider, others are more easily and ordinarily converted then you are: Publicans go to Heaven before you. You read in *Luke* 18.14, the Publican went away justified rather then the Pharisee. *Luther* hath a notable gloss upon these words: It is far more easie for harlots and notorious sinners to be saved, then for proud titular Saints; because the former are easily brought to a sense of their sins, but the latter are like to perish in the conceit of their own righteousness, except they be converted in an extraordinary manner. This I speak, not that I would dissuade you from a civil course of life, or draw you to an open prophaneness; but that you may not rest upon your moral accomplishments, upon your meanings, and think that you are Sermon-proof, that the Minister can hardly meet with your corruptions and consciences.

Luke 18.14. *Longè possibilius est meretrices & notorios peccatores salvari, quàm superbos sanctulos; illi enim tandem coguntur sentire sua peccata, hi verò in persuasione propriæ sanctitatis moriuntur, nisi mirabili modo convertuntur.*

2 If God doth convert such men, usually they are not so eminent in grace as others. This is expressed, *Luke* 7.43, *&c.* He to whom most is forgiven, loves most, and doth most service. Usually such content themselves with smaller measures of grace, then they whose transgressions have exceeded.

Luke 7.43.

3 What thy sins want in bulk and magnitude, thou makest up in number; *Your transgressions are many, your backslidings are increased, Jerem* 5.6. Thy continuance in sins makes thy sins equivalent to greater sins; if your sins fall short of others in nature, it may be they exceed in aggravations; it may be thou sinnest against more mercy, more knowledge: it may be thou mayest have more sin in thine heart, though anothers sins do more break out in his life.

Jer. 5.6.

So

So much for the second Use.

Use 3. To prophane men in two regards.

3 This Doctrine is usefull to prophane men, to the looser sort.

1 Let this be an invitation and incouragemement to you to come in to Christ, and to imbrace the Gospel. 1 Though your sins be great, yet they are not so great as the mercies of God. The mercy of God is compared to a Sea; the Sea, you know is a very great deep. A great *Leviathan* may be covered in the Sea, as well as a little fish; a great rock as well as a little pebble. A remarkable place you have, *Isa* 44. 22. *I have blotted out as a thick clond thy transgressions, and as a clond thy sins; return unto me, for I have redeemed thee.* The Sun can scatter both thick & thin clouds. Isa. 44. 22.

2 Though thou hast been very sinful, yet thy conversion taketh away all infamy from thee. *Paul* was once a blasphemer, &c. but that reproach was rolled away, when through the grace of God he found mercy. It is very observable, in the Genealogy of Christ there are but four Women mentioned, (it is not usual to mention Women in Genealogies) and the Scripture sets a marke of infamy upon them all. The first is *Thamar*, *Matth.* 1. 3. she was an incestuous Woman, for she lay with her father in law, as it is recorded, *Gen.* 38. 38. The second is *Rahab*, *Verse* 5. she was an harlot, *Heb* 11. 31. The third is *Ruth*, *Verse* 5. she came of *Moab*, the son of *Lot* by incest, begotten of his own daughter, *Gen* 19. 37. The fourth is *Bathsheba*, *Verse* 6. she was guilty of adultery. This is done for the comfort and incouragement of the most infamous sinners to come in to Christ Matth. 1. 3. Gen. 38. 38. Heb. 11. 31. Gen. 19. 37.

3 If God call you, you are likely to be greater instruments of his glory then others. A persecuting *Saul* became a preaching *Paul*; a wanton *Mary* became a weeping *Mary*; she, whose whoredoms had bin spoken of in all the places where she dwelt, afterward her grace came to be spoken of whersoever the Gospel was preached. So much for the first branch of that Use.

2 Because Doctrines of comfort many men suck poison from, and so get their ruine; therefore I shall lay down a Caution or two. Take heed you do not abuse this Doctrine.

1 Do not make the conversion of any scandalous sinner, to be any stumbling block in your way to heaven. It was the great stumbling block in the way of the Pharisees, when they saw that

that Christ would eat meat with Publicans and sinners, they said, *He was a friend of Publicans and sinners.* Do not entertain hard thoughts of Christ, nor of the wayes of Christ for that. Indeed, if Religion were any cloak of sin, for if it did countenance and incourage men in sin, it were something; but it is that which makes of a sinner a Saint. Conversion, though it finde us vile and bad, it doth not leave us so.

2 Take heed you do not suck this poison from it, that when you hear the worse men are before conversion, the better they will be after conversion. Some, it may be, will draw this inference from it: That it is the best to be as vile and wicked as one can, for so one shall be most zealous afterward. Take heed of that. For

1 It is a great question whether God will convert thee or not; and if thou be not converted, all thy sins will be so many cords to tie thee in hell; the aggravations of thy sin will be additions to thy torment and punishment.

2 The deeper thou art in sin, the greater must thy humiliation be. Will any wise man break his leg, because a broken bone well set and knit again will be stronger then ever it was before? Knotty timber shall have most blows.

3 The longer thou continuest in sin, the longer will God keep thee under suspension, and it will be long before he vouchsafeth the comforts of his Spirit, he will fill thee with indignation and horrour. Though great sins cannot *vastare gratiam*, lay waste the grace of God, yet they may *vastare conscientiam*, lay waste the peace of conscience; though it may be they will not put thee into a state of ejection, yet they will bring thee into a state of dejection; if thou art not cast off, yet thou shalt be cast down: and therefore take heed thou doest not abuse this precious doctrine.

And so much for this last Use.

And so I have done with both Doctrines, and finished the Text; *And from the dayes of* John *the Baptist until now, the Kingdome of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.*

FINIS.

The

The Zealous *CHRISTIAN* holding Communion with God, in wrestling and importunate Prayer.

The first Sermon.

LUKE 11. 8.

I say unto you, though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity, he will give unto him as many as he needeth.

Sermons Preacht at Lawrence *Jury* in *London*, June 18. 1649.

MY text is the conclusion of a familiar Parable used by Christ, whereby he instructs his Disciples touching the Doctrine and use of Prayer. The occasion offered to Christ to fall upon this Subject, is intimated, *Verse* 1. of this Chapter. *One of his Disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as* John *also taught his Disciples.* Whether it was one of the twelve Apostles, or one of the seventy Disciples that propounded the question is not easie to determine, nor is it material to know; Hereupon Christ gives them a platform or directions for Prayer, to direct them about the matter; and withal gives them a parable to inform concerning the manner of praying For the matter of it, you have it in these words, when you pray, say,

Context.

Our

Lords Prayer not commanded to be used.

Our father, &c. Not as though it were a command from Jesus Christ, that alwayes when we pray, we should use that forme of speech, which is here set down. Jesus Christ indeed intended it for a platform or a pattern to direct us in the making of our prayers; for there is nothing we stand in need of, and go to God for, but it is to be found in these words; but he never intended to tie up his people to this forme. And that I will prove by four reasons.

Reason 1.

Matth. 6. 9.

1. Because though *Luke* here saith, *When you pray, say, Our, &c.* yet *Matthew* varies in his expression and saith, *When you pray, say after this manner, Matth.* 6. 9. to teach us that we are to stick to the matter contained in this prayer; but we are not confined every time we pray, to use the same expressions. By *Luke* we learn, that the using of this forme of words is lawful; by *Matthew*, that it is not necessary.

Reason 2.

2. A second reason is this: Because in the recital of the Lords prayer by *Matthew* and *Luke* there is much difference; and though the difference be not materiall, yet it is verball, which is enough to prove what I intend; to wit, that we are not bound to the words. In the third Petition it is thus in *Matthew*, *Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven*; In *Luke* it is thus; *Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.* In the fourth Petition it is said in *Matthew*, *Give us this day our daily bread.* In *Luke* it is said, *Give us daily day by day our daily bread.* In the fifth Petition it is said in *Matthew*, *And forgive us our debts.* In *Luke* it is said, *for we forgive every one that is indebted to us.* Lastly, it is said in *Matthew*, *For thine is the Kingdome, the power and the glory for ever, Amen.* But these words are wholly left out in *Luke.* Which variance teacheth us thus much, that you must not recede from the matter or purport of the words, yet we are not to be superstitious and solicitous about the expressions, as *Chemnitius* observes.

Ne de verbis nimis superstitiosè solicui simus.

Reason 3.

3 Another reason to prove that we are not limited to that forme, is this: Because Jesus Christ himself, and all his Apostles did never use this forme in all their prayers. And if there had been a necessity that we should have used it, Christ would (as he might easily) have left a command behinde him in the Word, and also he would have practised it himself, that it might have been

been our example. This reason *Chemnitius* gives; There are many prayers in *Davids* Psalmes, many in the Prophets, many in the *Acts of the Apostles*, many in the Epistles of *Paul*, which are different in expression from this form, and yet doubtless received acceptance from God *.

* *Multæ sunt precationes in Psalmis Davidicis, multæ in Prophetis, multæ in Actis Apostolicis, multæ in Epistolis Paulinis, &c.*

Reason 4 Another argument is this. Because it is the work, and office of the Spirit of God, not onely to help the people of God in the manner how, but also in the matter what to pray, to put even words into our mouthes *Rom* 8.26. *We know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit helps our infirmities.* And upon these grounds it appears, that we are not bound to use that form of words. Ministers do somtimes use this form of prayer, to justifie the lawfulness of it, and sometimes they do not use it, lest people should dote too much upon set forms. And so much for the matter of prayer; I come now to the manner, and that is expressed in this Parable; which Parable is laid down in the 5,6,7,8 Verses. *And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves: For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him. And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not, the door is now shut, and my children are in bed with me; I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend; yet because of his importunity, he will arise and give him as many as he needeth:* Which Parable consists of two parts.

Rom.8.26.

Luke 11.5,6, 7,8.

1 A Prayer.

2 An answer to it.

In the prayer here are four parts. The coherence.

1 The relation of the person praying, to him, to whom he prayes, *his friend*, *Verse* 4. *Which of you shall have a friend, &c.* Whence observe, God must be a friend to us, before any of our prayers can be accepted.

2 The time of his address, *Verse* 5. *at midnight*, in times of greatest need, of extreamest necessity, *Isa.*26.9. *With my soul have I desired thee in the night.* Isa.26.9.

From whence observe, That the chiefest time for Gods people to be earnest in prayer to God, is a time of trouble.

3 The matter of his request, *Lend me three loaves*. By which some Interpreters understand the three persons in the Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the holy Ghost, Some refer them to the three cardinal Graces, *Faith, Hope*, and *Charity*; but these are vain interpretations. It is observable, that in Parables some things are used for ornament onely, not for the sense. The intent and design of it is this, That we are to order our prayers according to our present necessities.

4 There is the occasion of this request, *Verse 6. A friend of mine is come to me, and I have nothing, &c.*

The Answer returned to this request is double.

1 By way of negation, *Verse 7. Trouble me not, &c.* Observe, that Gods people may have denials to their prayers: The reason of this denial is, *the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed.* There are some times when Gods own people may pray to him, yet he shuts his eares to their prayers; God will as it were hide himself from the prayers of his own people, that they shall not come at him. Not onely the doors are shut, but his children are in bed with him. These children here spoken of are the creatures of God; from whence observe. That there may be times, when God may take away all his creature-comforts from his own people, that they shall not any wayes be helpful to them.

2 By way of concession, and that is in the words of the text; *I say unto you, Though he will not arise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity, he will arise and give him as many as he needs.*

The Text divided.

In which words you have; first, the relation of him that prays, to him whom he prayes, a friend.

Obser. *There must be a state of friendship between God and a sinner before his prayers can be heard.*

2 The condition upon which the prayer was heard, and that is set down two ways.

1 Negatively, he will hear him, not because he is his friend.

2 Positively, he will heare him because of his importunity.

Obser. 1 *That meerly a state of friendship and reconciliation with*

with God is not a sufficient ground for us, to believe that our prayers shall be heard, and accepted by God.

Obser. 2 *There must be an holy importunity, even in Gods own friends, in their prayers, to which they expect a gracious return.*

3 Here is the amplification of the conceſſion: There is more given in the conceſſion then was deſired in the ſupplication. He deſired but *three loaves*, *and becauſe of his* holy *importunity, he did riſe and give him as many as he needed.*

Whence obſerve; That where there is an holy importunity in our prayers, God doth, in his returns to that ſoul, give more then was deſired.

The firſt part of the text was the relation of the prayer, to him, to whom he makes his prayer. The Obſervation is this,

A man muſt be brought into a ſtate of friendſhip, or reconciliation with God, before any prayer he makes can be accepted. Doct. 1.

I will prove this Doctrine by three Reaſons, and then apply it.

The Reaſons are three.

1 God accepteth not the perſon for the prayers ſake, but the prayer for the perſons ſake. We read, *Geneſis* 4.4. *God hath reſpect unto* Abel, *and unto his offering*; firſt to *Abel*, then to his ſacrifice. God did accept of his ſervice, becauſe his perſon was in a ſtate of favour with God; God is firſt pleaſed with the worker, before he can accept the work. This is alſo laid down, *Hebrews* 11.5. *By faith* Enoch *was tranſlated that he ſhould not ſee death,——for before his tranſlation he had this teſtimony that he pleaſed God.* Now without faith in Chriſt to juſtifie thy perſon, thou canſt not pleaſe God. Here lies the great difference between the Papiſts and us. The Papiſts ſay that works juſtifie the perſon, we ſay, the perſon juſtifies the work; for make the tree good, and the fruit muſt needs be good. Reaſon 1. Gen. 4.4. Heb. 11.5.

2 Becauſe, till we be brought into that ſtate of reconciliation, we have no ſhare in the interceſſion, ſatisfaction and righteouſneſs of Jeſus Chriſt. And till we have a ſhare in them, our prayers cannot be accepted. *Jacob* could not receive the bleſſing from his father, but in the garments of his elder brother; nor can we receive any thing from the hands of God, but in the Reaſon 2.

robes of Christ: No prayer can be accepted by God, but in and through the intercession of Jesus Christ. If Christ be not an Intercessor in Heaven, no prayer will be heard on earth. In the eighth Chapter of *Revel.*v.3. it is written, there was *an Angel that came and stood at the Altar, having a golden Censer, and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all Saints upon the golden Altar which was before the throne.* The word in Greek is to this purpose, *That he should add it to the prayers of the Saints:* As if the prayer of Christ and a Believer were all one. In the 56 of *Isa.*v.7. God promiseth, *I will bring my people to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer, &c.* In the Hebrew it is thus, *I will make them joyful in the house of my prayer.* Our prayers are but as so many cyphers, that signifie nothing, till the intercession of Christ is added to them; without that they cannot be accepted.

Revel.8.3.

Ἵνα δώσῃ ταῖς προσευχαῖς τῶν ἁγίων.

Isa.56.7. בבית תפלתי

Reason 3. 3 Because, till we are in a state of friendship and reconciliation, we have not the assistance of Gods Spirit to help us; and if we have not the assistance of the Spirit, we shall never finde acceptance with him. All requests that are not dictated by the Spirit, are but the breathings of the flesh, which God regards not. Now till we are reconciled to God, we cannot have the Spirit, *Gal.*4.6. *And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.* So that till you be sons, you cannot have the Spirit.

Gal.4.6.

And so much for the Reasons: I come now to the application.

Use 1. If this be so, that a man must be in a state of friendship before his prayers can be accepted; Hence learn, That all that ever thou doest before that estate, is odious to God. Not onely thy sinful actions, but even thy civil, thy natural, yea, thy religious actions. Not that they are so in themselves, or in regard of God, but in regard of the doer of it, *Psal.*109.7. —— *Let his prayer be turned into sin.* Thou makest a prayer against sin, God will turn thy prayers into sin. Many prayers cannot turn one sin into a grace, but one sin wilfully, and resolutely continued in, can turn all thy prayers into sin, *Proverbs* 21.27. *The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord; how much more when he bringeth it with a wicked minde?*

Psal.109.7.

Prov.21.27.

A diſeaſed body, turns that food into corrupt humours, which an healthful body doth into ſound nouriſhment. I have read of a precious ſtone that had excellent vertue in it, but loſt all its efficacy, if it was put into a dead mans mouth. Prayer is an Ordinance of great excellency, of great efficacy; but if it be in a dead mans mouth, if it come out of the heart of one that is dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, it loſeth all its vertue: water that is pure in the fountain, is corrupted in the channel.

Uſe 2. 2 This doctrine overthrows one main pillar of the Romiſh Religion, juſtification by works. If God accepteth of the perſon before he accepts the work, how can any perſon be juſtified by works? Unleſs thy perſon be juſtified, unleſs thou art reconciled, thy works are wicked works; and can wicked works juſtifie? Good works make not a man good, but a good man makes a work good; and ſhall a work that a man made good, return again and make the man good? If we had no other reaſon againſt juſtification by works (ſaith M. *Perkins*) but this, it were ſufficient.

Uſe 3. 3 Let this teach you, not onely to look to the fitneſs and diſpoſedneſs of your hearts in prayer, but alſo to make inquiry what thou art that prayeſt. It is our duty, and it is very good to look to the qualification of the heart in prayer, to look to the qualification of the duty; but the main work is to look after the qualification of the perſon, and to ſee whether thou art in a ſtate of favour and reconciliation with God; for if the perſon be not in favour with God, you may be confident the petitions will not be heard nor accepted, but God looks upon it as the corrupt breathings of thy ſinful and corrupt heart. You are to look therefore in the performance of duty, whether you can go to God in prayer as a Father. There are many that look after the qualification of their duty; but few look after the qualification of the perſon, to ſee whether they be juſtified or no, whether God be their friend or not. But we ſhould mainly look to this, for let the heart of a man be never ſo well diſpoſed, (let us ſuppoſe it, for indeed no unreconciled men can be well diſpoſed, to ſpeak properly) yet if thy perſon be not juſtified, thy prayer cannot be accepted. God cares not for the Rhetorick of prayers, how eloquent they are; nor for the Arith-

Arithmetick of prayers, how many they are; nor for the Logick of them, how rational and methodical they are; nor for the Musique of them, what an harmony and melody of words thou hast; but he looks at the divinity of prayers, which is from the qualification of a person, from a justified person, and in a sanctified manner. It is good to enquire, Is my heart right? Is my minde composed? Are my affections raised, kindled in prayer? But chiefly enquire, is my person accepted of God?

Use 4. 4 Let me give a caution here, Take heed you do not mistake this Doctrine: Let no man think, that because God accepts no prayer, except the person be justified, therefore wicked men are excused from prayer; for though God doth not accept of every mans prayer, yet every man in the World ought to pray; For

1 They must pray as creatures, that stand in need of their Creator. The Ravens cry, and God giveth them meat.

2 The Lord blames wicked men for not praying to him,

Jer.10.25. Rom.3.11. *Jer.*10.25. *Powr out thy wrath upon the Heathen, that know thee not, and upon the families that call upon thy Name.* Rom. 3.11. *There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.*

Acts 8.22,23. 3. They are commanded to pray, *Acts* 8.22,23. *Peter* said to *Simon Magus, Repent therefore of this thy wickednesse, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee; for I perceive thou art in the gall of bitternesse, and bonds of iniqnity.*

The

The second Sermon.

LUKE 11. 8.

I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity, he will give unto him as many as he needeth.

AND thus much for the first Doctrine, and first part of the Text, the relation between him that prayes and him to whom prayers are made. I come now to the second part, which is the condition upon which the prayer was heard; and that I told you was set down two wayes.

1 Negatively.

2 Positively.

1 Negatively, Not because he is his friend.

The observation thence is this,

Doct. 2. *That a state of friendship, or reconciliation with God is not sufficient to assure a man that God will give returns to his prayers.* Although a man must be brought into a state of friendship and favour with God, before his prayers can be heard, yet it is not a sufficient ground for a man to believe that God will give him an answer of all his prayers. *He will give unto him, not because he is his friend.* So that a godly man may make many prayers, and yet God may not give any answer to his prayers.

In the handling of this Doctrine, I shall do three things.

1 Shew the reasons of the Doctrine.

2 I shall shew, in what cases God may refuse to give his own people the things that they pray for.

3 I shall shew how we may know, when God denies to hear our prayers, whether the denial be in mercy.

The first particular is the reason, why God may, and doth some-

sometimes deny to hear the prayers of his friends: And that is this, Because, God hath tied returnes of prayer, not onely to the qualification of the person, but also to the qualification of the duty; that the duty be performed not onely by a fit person, but also in a right way, in a right manner, to a right end. God doth not say, Let a godly man pray how he will, I will hear his prayers; that were the way to make him to be careless and remiss in the performance of duties. Therefore the Lord expects qualification of the duty, as well as of the person. God requires that duties be done with feeling, fervencie, faith, fear and reverence; they must be done in a right manner.

There is a fivefold qualification that God requires, even of his friends, as a condition of their acceptance.

Psal.10.17. 1 The heart must be prepared, *Psal.* 10.17. *Lord, thou hast heard the desire of the humble, thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear.* So *Iob* 11.13,14,15. *If thou prepare thine heart, and stretch out thine hand towards him. If iniquity be in thine hand, put it far away, and let not wickedness dwell in thy tabernacle. For then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot; yea, thou shalt be stedfast, and shalt not fear.* That is the first particular.

Job 11.13,14, 15.

2 Sin must be removed. So you finde in the place last quoted, *iniquity must be put far away, &c.* When Gods own people come to worship before God, they must not let any sin lie upon their consciences, unrepented of and indulged.

Psal.25.1. 3 The affections must be raised. *David*, when he set himself to prayer, he saith, *Unto thee, ô Lord, do I lift up my soul, Psal.* 25.1. You read often in Scripture, of lifting up a prayer to God, *Isai.*37.4. ——*It may be the Lord thy God will hear the words of* Rabshakeh, *whom the King of* Assyria *hath sent*; ——*Wherefore lift up thy prayer for the remnant that is left. Jer.*7.16. *Pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them.* 1 Tim. 2. 8. *I will that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.*

Isa.37.4.

Jer.7.16.

1 Tim.2.8.

1 Cor.7.35. Dan.9.3. Psal.5.2. אערך more militari disponam. 4 The minde must be composed in prayer, 1 *Cor.*7.35. We are *to attend upon the Lord without distraction.* Daniel *set his face unto Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, Dan.*9.3. *In the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee,* said *David, Psal.*5.3. As an Archer when he shoots an arrow, takes care that his hand

shake

ſhake not; his heart was ſo fixed on God, that he could directly ſend his prayers unto him. Doſt thou think, ô man, that God will hear that prayer which thou doeſt not hear thy ſelf? Will God regard that prayer, that thou doeſt not regard? Will God grant thy requeſt, when thou doeſt not know what thou askeſt, becauſe of that indiſpoſedneſs and diſtraction that lies upon thy ſpirit? You muſt therefore take care, when you betake your ſelves to prayer, that the Devil do not diſtract and diſturb you.

5 The deſires muſt be enlarged after God in prayer, Jer. 29. 13. *Then you ſhall ſeek me and finde me, when you ſearch for me with all your heart.* God bids us *open our mouthes wide, and I will fill them*, *Pſal.* 81. 10. God hath not promiſed to fill the heart, unleſs our mouth be opened.

Now put all theſe together: Our prayers will not be heard, except, 1 Our hearts be prepared. 2 Sin removed: 3 Our affections raiſed. 4 Our mindes compoſed. 5 Our deſires inlarged. And judge, whether this be not ground enough for the Doctrine, That a ſtate of friendſhip is not ſufficient for the the acceptance of our prayers.

Queſt. When doth God deny requeſts? *Anſw.*

I come now to the ſecond thing, and that is, a Caſe of conſcience: it is this; In what caſes may God refuſe to give his people the things they pray for? I anſwer.

1 In caſe you indulge any ſin in the heart, *Pſal.* 66. 18. *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear my prayer.* Sin which is in thine heart, by thine indulgence and approbation, doth provoke God, that he will not give an anſwer to thy prayers.

2 In caſe thou doeſt ſeek for any mercy from God, to be fuel for thy ſin and luſt, *James* 4. 3. *Ye ask and receive not, becauſe ye ask amiſs, that you may conſume it upon your luſts.* So the mother of *Zebedees* children, *Matth.* 20. 21. ſhe ſaid to Chriſt, *Grant that theſe my two ſons may ſit, the one on thy right hand, the other on thy left in thy Kingdom.* Now this was an ambitious deſire; for ſhe ſhewed Chriſt would have reigned upon earth, as an earthly King, and ſhe deſired that they might be next him, as he ſat upon the Throne. Therefore Chriſt ſaid, *You know not what you ask.* Chriſt would not give any anſwer

James 4. 3.

Matth. 20. 21.

swer to her request; he would not gratifie her pride and ambition.

3 In case God sees we are not able to use the mercy well when we have it. If you would ask gifts from God, it may be God sees, that enlarged gifts would make thee proud, and that thou wouldest be puffed up with them, and exalt thy self above thy brethren, therefore God will deny thee. We read, *Gen.* 26. 1,2. *When there was a famine in the Land,——He went to enquire of the Lord, whither he should go down into Egypt*, God answered, *Go not down into Egypt*, God would not let him go; but in the dayes of *Jacob* there was a famine in the Land, *Gen.* 46. 3. *And God said to* Jacob, *Go down into Egypt.* Now what might be the reason, that God would have *Jacob* go down into *Egypt*, and not *Isaac?* The reason is this, *Isaac* was a man of weaker graces then *Jacob* was; and God saw, that if *Isaac* had gone down into *Egypt* for corn, he would have fallen into the sins of the Land. Now *Jacob* was a strong man in grace and in gifts; for as a Prince he wrestled with God, and prevailed, and was called *Israel.* God saw that *Jacob* would resist their idolatrous wayes, and not be guilty of their sins. So you may ask mercies of God, & it may be you are not able to manage them well; And therefore God denies you; when as another askes the same mercy, and God gives it to him; because he sees he will use it well, and improve it to Gods glory. Therefore reflect upon thy self; and when God denies thee a mercy, which thou hast begged at his hands; say to thy self, This denial is in mercy, for he did not think me fit for it. If men would take this way to consider of Gods dealing with them, it would silence all the murmurings and repinings of their hearts against God.

Gen. 26. 1,2.

Gen. 46. 3.

Qui frigidè orat, docet negare.

4 If you pray but cursorily and carelesly, then God may deny you. He that prayes coldly, doth, as it were, intreat God to give him a denial. God promiseth to be found, if we seek him with our whole heart: But if we be careless and regardless our selves, how can we expect that God should regard us?

So much for answer to that Question, In what cases God may deny his peoples prayers?

This is the second thing.

3 The third particular, is another Case of conscience. And it is this:

Seeing God doth not hear the prayers of his people in some cases; How may we know, whether the denial of our Prayers be in mercy or no?

Quest. Denials of prayer, when in mercy?

God doth not hear the prayers of wicked men, he denies them in wrath; but his peoples prayers he denies in mercy, and that is in these cases.

Answ.

1 This is a mercy, in case any of his people ask any thing that is sinful in it self. God denies that to his people in mercy, which he gives to others in wrath. God will not alwayes give to his people what they pray for, but what is best for them. If God should give his people all they ask, they would be undone. It is mercy to deny a mad man a sword, for he would cut his own throat with it: To deny a childe a knife, for he would cut his fingers with it. You have an instance in *Peter*, Luke 5.8. *When* Simon Peter *saw him, he fell down at Jesus his knees, saying, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, ô Lord.* Had Jesus Christ granted *Peter* his request, he had been undone for ever; Therefore he would not depart from him. So that this denial was in mercy. As on the other side, it is a demonstration of Gods wrath many times, when God doth grant mercies to wicked men. So it was to *Pharaoh*, he desired that God would remove the plagues from him; God granted it, thereby to harden *Pharaohs* heart, and make him ripe for destruction.

Luke 5.8.

2 God denies in mercie, if that we ask would be an occasion of sin. Suppose a man beg wealth; God sees the having of wealth would make him a proud man: Now the denial of that is a mercy to him. As in the fore-mentioned instance, God would not let *Isaac* go down to *Egypt*, because it would have been an occasion of sin to him. As he said very well, God denies that in love, which he grants in anger. God doth not hear many in their desires, that he may hear them for their good.

Concedit iratus quod negat propitius; multos Deus non exaudit ad voluntatem, ut exaudiat ad salutem.

3 God denies a prayer in mercy, when he gives a better in lieu of it; It was the desire of *Moses* that he might go into the land of *Canaan*, but it was better to him to go to the heavenly *Canaan*, and therefore God translated him thither. So the Apostles desired Christ to tell them, when he would

Acts 1.7,8.

restore the Kingdom to *Israel*. He would not resolve them that, yet he gave them a greater mercy, for he gave them the holy Ghost. So *David* desired the life of that childe that was illegitimate; but God took away the Bastard (which would have been a living monument of *Davids* folly) and gave him a *Solomon*. God will either give us what we ask (saith *Bernard*) or what he knows to be better for us.

Aut dabit Deus quod petimus, aut quod novit utilius.

4 God may deny to return this request in mercy, to quicken our hearts and affections in prayer, and to make us more eager in the pursuit after mercy. God many times denies that mercy which thou beggest, not as though he would not hear thee, but to see how thy heart will be drawn out towards him in prayer, to make thee more vehement and importunate in thy desires. Thus God was angry with the prayers of his people, *Psal.*80.4. that they might be more fervent. God doth not delay to hear our prayers, (saith *Anselme*) because he hath no minde to give, but that our desires may be kindled, and so he may take occasion to give more plentifully.

Psal.80.4. *Non differt Deus cò quòd dare non vult, sed ut auctio desiderio abundantiùs dare possit.* Anselme.

5 God may deny a thing in mercy, if thou didst too eagerly desire the mercy, and too affectionately set thine heart upon it; if thou lovest it too much in the expetition, thou wilt be excessive in the fruition: *Rachel* had better wanted children, which she so impetuously desired; for she had a childe and died in childe-bed. God turns mercies too passionately desired into curses, and snares to us, or else takes them away from us. And so I have answered this second Question. And that is the third and last particular; I come now to application.

Use 1. *Use* 1 Consider this, ô all you wicked and ungodly men; Consider how far you are from having your prayers heard; What? Will not a father hear his childe, when he prayes to him coldly and remisly, and will he heare a slave? If God will not hear the remiss prayer of a godly man, doest thou think he will hear the prayers of a wicked man? If God will not hear his peoples prayers at all times, notwithstanding they are in a state of friendship, will God hear thy prayers, ô wicked man, that art in a state of enmity against him? If God will not hear the prayers of his own people, which are some-

ſometimes his delight, doeſt thou think he will hear thy prayers, which are alwayes an abomination to him?

2 This ſhould put an holy awe upon the hearts of all godly men; what though you are in a ſtate of favour with God, though this will carry your ſouls to heaven, yet this will not bring you a return of your prayers. You muſt have your hearts rightly qualified, before God will give a return of thy prayers. And thus much for the ſecond Doctrine, and alſo for the negative condition.

I come now to the condition poſitive, to which returns of prayer are anneved: *Though he will not riſe and give him, becauſe he is his friend; yet becauſe of his importunity, he will riſe and give him as many as he needs.* From which part of the text you may obſerve this Doctrine:

That the people of God muſt not content themſelves with being in a ſtate of favour, and friendſhip with God, but they alſo muſt labour after this holy importunity in prayer, before they can have their prayer accepted. Doct. 3.

In the handling of this Doctrine, I ſhall proceed in this method.

1 I ſhall anſwer an Objection that ſtands in the way.

2 I ſhalt ſhew what this importunity is.

3 At what times God works this in his people.

4 Wherein lies the difference between an holy importunity, and a natural impotunity.

5 What are the reaſons why the people of God muſt have this importunity in prayer.

6 How comes it to paſs that ſo many want this holy importunity in their prayers?

7 What helps may be uſed to attein to this fervency and importunity of ſpirit. And then I ſhall apply it by way of caution.

1 I muſt anſwer an Objection which is this, *It may be ſome will ſay, What need is there that this condition ſhould be ſo much preſſed what need is there of importunity in prayer? Hath not God decreed what mercy to beſtow upon me? if ſo, then I am ſure I ſhall have thoſe mercies, let me pray how I will; and on the contrary, if God hath not decreed to give me ſuch a mercy, I ſhall not have them, let me* Object.

me pray never so well; for the decree of God is effectual, irresistible, and cannot be altered; All mine importunity cannot alter the decree of God.

Sol. For answer to this, I shall propound three things to your consideration.

1 We have not to do to search into the secret will of God; we are to minde the revealed will of God, and not the secret; It concerns not us to know what God will do, but what God would have us to do. Deut. 29. 29. *Secret things belong to God, but revealed things to us, and to our children*; we know not any thing of the decree and counsel of God, but onely as he is pleased to reveal it.

Deut. 29. 29.

Though God can give a mercy without prayer, yet he hath not any where promised to give it without prayer. Prayer is the means that God hath appointed us to use for the obteining of mercy.

3 The decree of God must not make us to be remiss in prayer; for God hath decreed not onely the end, but also the means; as God hath decreed to give thee mercy, so he hath also decreed that thou shouldest pray for it. And therefore whersoever the decree or purpose of God is mentioned, it is used as an angument, to stir up the people of God to prayer. *For thou, ô Lord, of hosts, God of Israel, hast revealed to thy servant saying, I will build thee an house, therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee. And now (ô Lord God) thou art that God, and thy words be true, and thou hast promised this goodness unto thy servant. Therefore now let it please thee to bless the house of thy servant, that it may continue for ever before thee: For thou (ô Lord God) hast spoken it, & with thy blessing let the house of thy servant be blessed for ever.* You see here God had purposed, and promised to bless the house of *David*, and to continue it for ever; Doth this make *David* remiss in prayer? Doth *David* argue, what need I pray for this mercy, seeing God is resolved to give it? No, *David* takes this hint, and useth it to good purpose in his prayer. Another instance you have in *Isaac*. God had decreed, and promised that the seed of *Abraham* should *be multiplied as the Stars of the Heaven*, *Genes.* 15. 5. and that this promise should be

2 Sam. 7. 27, 28, 29.

Gen. 15. 5.

ac-

accomplished in *Isaac*. Did this make *Isaac* neglect prayer? No, for we read, *Genesis* 25.21. Isaac *intreated the Lord for his wife, because she was barren, and the Lord was intreated of him*, &c. Though God had promised, that in Isaac *all the Nations of the Earth should be blessed*, yet *Isaac* betakes himself to prayer to God, for the accomplishment of that mercy that was decreed and promised. Gen.25.21.

But you will say, Suppose GOD *hath decreed he will not give me the mercy I pray for, what benefit is it for me to pray for it?* *Object.*

I answer, *Sol.*

1 It is more then any man doth know, that God hath decreed he will deny thee the mercy thou askest.

2 If it be so that God hath decreed not to give thee the mercy thou prayest for, yet God will give thee the return of prayer into thy bosome; though it may be he will not give thee the particular thing thou desirest. And thus I have dispatcht the first thing, I have answered the Objection.

The second particular is this, *What is this holy importunity?* *Quest.* What is holy importunity.

I answer in general, The word in the Original signifies impudence, or want of shame. It is a Metaphor taken from Beggars, who are impudently importunate, and take no denial; if you deny them once, they will ask you again, and again, and never leave till they get what they desire. It is a gathering together of all the affections of the soul, a stirring them all up in prayer, whereby the soul is so earnestly desirous after the good it wants, that it will not rest, nor leave off the duty, until he do finde some return. This is meant, *Rom.*12.12. *Continuing instant in prayer.* The original word is very emphatical; It notes not onely to persevere, but to persevere and continue with strength, to ingage all a mans possibility in the work. It notes utmost instancy and importunity; It is a phrase borrowed from Dogs, that when they are hunting, will not cease following the game till they have got it: So a godly man will pursue God in duty, and never leave till he finde the mercy he begs from him. *Ansv.* διὰ γὲ τὴν ἀναίδειαν. Rom.12.12. προσκαρτεροῦντες.

Thus did holy *Jacob*, *Gen*,32.26. *God said, Let me go, for the day breaketh: And he said, I will not let thee go unless thou bless me.* Gen.32.26.

So

So it is said of *Elias*, James 5.17. *He prayed earnestly.* In the Greek. It is, *in praying, he prayed*; to shew that a Christian, when he is praying should yet pray, should pray more earnestly, he should be as it were in agony in prayer; It was said of *Augustine* in his preaching, that he never left preaching, till he found he had done some good upon the hearts of his hearers. So must you pray, and continue praying, and do not give over, till you finde some good done upon your hearts, till you finde sin weakned, & graces strengthened; This is the holy importunity that is here spoken of. And so much for the second particular.

James 5.17. προσευχὴ προσηύξατο.

The third particular is this.

Quest. When are Gods people most importunate?

When doth the Lord work in the hearts of his people this holy importunity, what seasons are they wherein the people of God are most importunate?

Answ. 1. *Plurimi novitate conversionis ferventes erant.*

I answer.

1 God works this holy importunity in the hearts of his people at their first conversion, then is the time when they are most earnest after God in duties. *Augustine* tells us it was so in his time, first Converts were most fervent, and affectionate towards God in duty, when they were first brought from the state of nature into the state of grace. At the first taste of the excellency of grace they are much ravished with it, because of the newness of the conditions; New things do most affect men.

2 There is the most holy importunity in a man, when he lives under the clearest apprehension, and assurance of Gods love in Christ. *Psal.*42.4. *When I remembred these things, I poure out my soul in me:* when he remembred, and considered the marks and tokens of Gods grace in him, and love to him, this made him importunate.

Psal.42.4.

A Christian may be compared to a Marigold, which while the Sun shines upon it, opens it self, but afterwards shuts. Christians, when the Sun of Gods favour shines upon them, their souls are enlarged, their affections inflamed towards God; but when God hides his face, they are troubled, their hearts are straitned, & they cannot pray as they used to do. It is said of the Nightingale, that when she thinks any one is neer, she sings more sweetly then when she is alone in the Wood. The soul, when

when it sees that God is near it, and that his favour is towards it, then it sings most sweetly, then it prayes most fervently; but when the love of God is clouded, and the soul left as it were alone, then the affections flag, and grow remisse in prayer.

3 Another time when the people of God are importunate, is when the time for the accomplishment of a promise growes near. This we finde in *Daniel, when he understood by books the number of the years whereof the Word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the Prophet, that he would accomplish 70 years in the desolation of Jerusalem*, then he set his face *to seek the Lord by prayer & supplication.* *Daniel* prayed at other times, but then he was most importunate when the promise was neer the accomplishment, then he was most fervent. To the same purpose is that, Jer. 29, 13. *Then shall you call upon me, and ye shall seek for me, and finde me, when ye shall search for me with all your hearts.* During the seventy years, the Jews did not express any holy importunity towards God, which is the reason of that expression, Dan. 9. 13. *Though all this evil is come upon us, yet made we not our prayer before the Lord our God,* &c. But when the seventy years were come neer to an end, the Jews prayed more the last year, then they did all the seventy years before. Therefore said God, *I know my thoughts that I have towards you, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Then shall ye call upon me, and shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you.* Therefore when you see mercies for a Family, or a Nation wanting, if thine heart be indifferent, that thou dost not care whether thou prayest or not, then you may conclude that mercy will be long before it comes. But if you finde that God drawes out thine heart for mercy, if God stir up thy desires, and work this holy importunity in thine heart, it is an argument that mercy is near; for when prayer is in thine heart, mercy is at the door.

Dan. 9. 2, 3.

Jer. 29. 13.

Dan. 9. 13.

Jer. 29. 11, 12.

4 Another time when the people of God are most importunate in prayer, is, when they are most drawn off from the world, when they are most free from worldly distractions. The same word in the Hebrew signifies both meditation and prayer; to shew, that when the heart hath been drawn off from the world by meditation, then it is in a fit posture for prayer.

שיח

5 Another time, is when they walk most closely with God. He that lives carelesly, will not pray importunately. Therefore Job saith, *If iniquity be in thine hands, put it away, so shalt thou lift up thine heart, &c.* to note that iniquity entertained and countenanced in the soul, is the great hinderer of the lifting up of the heart; the great cooler of importunity. Job 11.13.

6 Another time is, in deep and bitter afflictions, then the people of God are most importunate in their prayers, *Psal.*130.1,2. *Out of the deeps have I cried unto thee, Lord, hear the voice of my supplication.* So *Psal.*142.1,2. *I cried unto the Lord with my voice,——I poured out my complaint before him; I shewed before him my trouble.* So it is said of the *Jews*, *Psal.*107.6. *They cried unto the Lord in their trouble.*——And the same words are repeated, *ver.* 13,19,28. When trouble and great distress was upon the *Jews* by *Sennacherib*, it is said, *For this cause* Hezekiah *the King, and the Prophet* Isaiah, *the son of* Amos, *prayed, and cried to heaven.* So it is said of *Manasseh*, *When he was in affliction, he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly,——and prayed unto him, &c.* So said that good woman, 1 *Sam.*1.15. *I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit, and have poured out my soul before the Lord.* Thus it was with the whole Church, *Isai.*26.9. *With my soul have I desired thee in the night: yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early: for when thy judgments are abroad, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.* And that is the last season, wherein the people of God use to be importunate with God in prayer. Psal.130.1,2. Psal.142.1,2. Psal.107.6. 2 Chron.32.20 2 Chron.33.12,13. 1 Sam.1.15. Isai.26.9.

And so much for the third thing.

The

The third Sermon.

Luke 11. 8.

I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity, he will give unto him as many as he needeth.

THe fourth particular is this; Wherein lies the difference betwixt that holy importunity, in the hearts of Gods people, and the seeming importunity which flowes from the gifts of nature?

Difference between holy and natural importunity, in seven things.

Answ. It lies in these seven things.

1 An holy importunity makes a man restless till his prayers be heard, *Psal.*143.6.7.—— *I stretch forth mine hands unto thee. My soul thirsteth after thee, as a thirsty land; hear me speedily, my spirit fails; hide not thy face from me, lest I be like them that go down into the pit.* As a thirsty land. A thirsty land is never satisfied, till it gets rain. So *Psal.*119.20. *My soule breaks for the longing it hath* —— *Psal.*42.1. *As the Hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, ô God.* The Hart never rests, never gives over running, till it come to the water. Such is the importunity of a godly man, he is never quiet, never satisfied till his prayers be returned into his bosome. But it is otherwise with an Hypocrite, he prayes for mercy, for pardon of sinne, but he can rest contented, though God doth not hear him; he can beg grace, but he can be very well satisfied without grace, *Prov.*13.4. *The soul of the sluggard desires and hath nothing, but the soul of the diligent maketh fat.*

Psal.143.6,7.

Psal.119.20. Psal.42.1.

Prov,13.4.

2 An holy importunity is known by this, That it makes a man more earnest for spiritual, then temporal mercies. This hath been the temper of Gods people, *Psal* 4.6. *There be many that say, Who will shew us any good; but, Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.* Observe the difference between

Psal,4.6.

Davids and wicked mens tempers: Their great question and desire was, Who would shew them any good, any temporal good? Who would give them the increase of corn and wine? But *Davids* heart breathed after other things, after Gods favour, and the light of his countenance. So, Psal. 143.6,7,8. *I stretch forth mine hands unto thee,——my soul thirsteth after thee.*—— Psal.143.6,7,8

Psal.63.1. *O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee; my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is.* *David* was in a wilderness, he wanted water: One would have thought he should have sought God for water: But you see *Davids* desires run in another channel; he thirsted more for God then for water; he more desired spiritual advantages then temporal enjoyments. This importunity makes a man more to endeavour against sin then affliction; more to desire saving grace, then common mercies. But now the heart of an hypocrite, is more desirous of temporal then spiritual mercies. You read in Hosea 7.14. *They have not cried unto me with their heart, when they howled upon their beds; they assemble themselves for corn and wine, and they rebell against me.* They howled, for what? Was it for grace and spiritual blessings? No, it was for corn, and wine, and oil; not for grace, not for acquaintance with God. Another instance you have, Acts 8. *Simon Magus* offered money to purchase the Holy Ghost. What was his end in desiring the Holy Ghost? Was it to obtain a spirituall mercy? No, but it was that he might work miracles. And further, when *Peter* put him upon the begging of a spirituall mercy, vers. 22.—— *Pray God, if perhaps the thoughts of thine heart may be forgiven thee.* But *Simon Magus* followed not *Peters* rule, he had no great desire of the pardon of sin, or any spirituall mercie; but he prayes, that none of those things, which *Peter* had spoken, might come upon him, vers. 24. That is, that his money might not perish, nor he perish with it, that his gifts might not perish; this was his great request and desire.

Psal.63.1.

Hosea 7.14.

Acts 8.

2. An holy importunity of Gods people, is more in sensiblenesse of the inward affections of the heart, then in the outward expressions of words, Psal.38.9. *All my desire is before thee, and my groanings are not hid from thee.* *Davids* heart panted and failed him, vers. 10. but not a word of expressions, though

Psal.38.9.

his

his expressions were very good. Rom.8.26. *The Spirit helps our infirmities with sighes and groans that cannot be uttered.* It is said, Revel.5.8. *The four and twenty Elders had golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of the Saints.* They are called odours for their sweetnesse; golden, for their excellency; and vials, which are vessels of large extent in the belly, but narrow mouthed. The hearts of Gods people are like vials, many times inlarged within, when they are straitned in their words and expressions. There are many times most dilated desires in the hearts of the Saints, and yet they are so narrow-mouthed, that they are not able to utter. But now it is otherwise with hypocrites, they have more in the expression then in the action. It was Gods complaint against the Jews of old, *They draw nigh to God with their lips, when their hearts were far from him.* An hypocrite indeed performes duty, but his duties never reach to his heart: They are like a pot that is hot at top, but cold at bottom.

Rom.8.26.
Revel.5.8.
Isai.29.13.

4. An holy importunity makes a man more inlarged before God in secret, then before men in publick. *O my Dove, that art in the clifts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs; let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice, for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.* The voice of Christs Church is sweet, even then when she is in secret, when none but God beholds her, Cant.8.13. *Thou that dwellest in the gardens, the companions hearken to thy voice; cause me to hear it.* But now an hypocrite doth never care to have any secret communion with God; he cares not to pray alone; and if he be brought to that, he takes no care of his heart, he curbs not his thoughts; all his care is in company, popular applause, and vain-glory, is as the winde to the sails of a Ship, that makes their affections move the faster. An hypocrite, in this regard, may be resembled to a Nightingale, which sings sweetest when any man stands neer her. So carnal men, when others are witnesses of their actions, then they put forth the utmost of their ability. They are of *John's* temper, he was zealous only upon that condition, that others would see it.

Cant.2.14.
Cant.8.13.

5. This holy importunity makes a godly man the more humble, the more enlarged he is to prayer: The reason is, because he looks upon his enlargements, not as coming from the strength of his natural parts or abilities, but as the free gift and

and gracious dispensation of Gods Spirit: and so he sees he hath nothing whereof to boast; and so it makes him low in his own eyes. You know a Violet, that is one of the sweetest flowers, grows lowest in the earth. The fullest ears of Corn do most hang down: The fullest barrels make the least noise: So the most gracious heart is the most low and vile in its own apprehensions, is the neerest earth, but dust and ashes. The fuller he is of divine discoveries, or enlargement, the less boasting doth he make in the World. A Ship, the heavier it is laden, the less it is tost with windes and waves; the more empty it is, the more it is lifted up above the water; so a man, the more empty, the more tost to and fro with every winde of applause. Grace is, as it were, the ballast of the soul, to keep down a mans spirits, and make him humble in the midst of wit and parts. *Be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.* Be sober, and not puffed up, do not boast of your enlargements. Though it is true, it doth refer to another thing, yet *Byfield* refers it to prayer; and he saith, That man that prayes to God, with most enlargedness of affections towards God, that man cannot but he must watch and be sober. Sobriety is opposed to pride, for a man man may be dumbe with his own gifts and graces; and watchfulness is opposed to remisness, and deadness, and carelesness of spirit in the performance of duties. Thus it is with a sincere man that hath this true importunity in him. But now wicked men, if ever they have enlargements in duty, it puffs them up. It is with them, as it was with *Uzziah*, 2 *Chron.*26.16. When God had helped him marvellously, till he was strong; *But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction.* When God helps the soul of such a man in duty, it makes him to lift up himself against God, and be puffed up above his Brethren.

1 Pet.4.7.

6. He that hath this holy importunity in him, his desires are rather quickened then abated by denials. You finde this in the woman of *Canaan*, *Matth.*15.22. She cried unto Christ, saying, *Have mercy, on me, ô Lord, thou Son of* David, *my daughter is grievously vexed with a Devil:* Jesus Christ takes no notice of her; *He answered her not a word, Verse* 23. There is one discouragement. One would have thought she would have desisted; but she prayed again, and *the Disciples besought him to send her away,*

Matth.15.22.

away, *Verse* 23. There was another discouragement, which would have knocked off the desires of many; but she continues her request still. Jesus Christ himself answers her, *I am not sent, but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel*, *Verse* 24. There is a third discouragement; and yet this doth not cool her affections, but she comes afresh upon Christ, she came, and worshipped, saying, *Lord, help me*, *Verse* 25. Yet she found another repulse, and that worse then any of the former; *It is not meet to take the childrens bread, and give it to dogs*, vers. 26. Christ you see calls her a dog; and yet all this doth not cast her off, but she takes encouragement, even from this discouraging answer: *And she said, Truth, Lord, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters Table*, vers. 27. She was resolved she would not give over, till she got what she came for, till Christ had said, *O woman, great is thy faith, be it unto thee even as thou wilt*, vers. 28. Denials are to the Saints, as water to the Smiths-forge, when it is sprinkled upon it, it is so far from cooling or quenching it, that it makes it burn with the greater heat: So the denials, and discouragements Gods people meet with, they serve for bellows, to blow up those sparks that are in them into a flame, to make their desires stronger, their affections to burn the hotter. But now to an Hypocrite, denials and discouragements, do take off the wheels of his affections, and make them to move slowly and heavily: *Job* 21.15. *What is the Almighty that we should serve him, and what profit should we have if we pray unto him?* We get no good by it, the mercies we ask, are not yet in our hands. Now this argues a sinful impatiency, and a want of holy importunity. Job 21.15.

7 Holy importunity is kindled in the heart, by the motions and operations of Gods blessed Spirit, *Gal.* 4.6. *Because you are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.* In the time of the Law, those sacrifices that were accepted were burnt with fire from heaven, *Levit.* 9.24. *There came fire out from before the Lord, and consumed upon the Altar the burnt-offering.*——And so in *Elijahs* time, 1 *Kings* 18.38. When *Elijah* had laid his sacrifice upon the Altar of the Lord, *Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt-sacrifice and the wood.*——So the Heathens Vestal-flames were kindled with Gal. 4.6. Levit. 9.24. 1 Kings 18.38.

with Sun-beams. The true importunity is from above, it is a fire kindled by God himself in the hearts of his people. But there is another importunity that comes from natural principles, from natural abilities, a strong memory, a profound judgment, a ready wit, a fluent tongue; and these are very advantagious to the duty. There is the gift of prayer, as well as the grace of prayer. Some are importunate in prayer, out of fleshly respects. Now this is but a counterfeit importunity. And thus much for the fourth particular, the difference between holy and natural importunity.

The fourth Sermon.

LUKE 11. 8.

I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity, he will give unto him as many as he needeth.

The fifth Particular, Why we must be importunate. *Reason* 1.

THE fifth particular is this. *What are the reasons why Gods people must labour for this holy importunity in their prayers?*

I answer, 1 Because God hath tied and promised returnes, not to the persons praying, but to the qualifications of their prayers. And when the Scripture makes mention of this duty of prayer, it doth also make mention of several concomitants, that must go along with it, to make it acceptable. To instance, there are divers concomitants which the Scripture holds forth to be necessary, for the acceptance of our prayers.

Concomitants of Prayer.

Heb. 11. 6.

1 We must pray believingly, *Heb.* 11. 6. *He that commeth to God must believe.* *Mar.* 11. 24. *Therefore I say unto you* (saith Christ) *What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive*

ceive them, and ye shall have them. He doth not say; pray how you will, you shall have them; but pray in such and such manner, pray believingly, and then you shall receive; very much to this purpose is, 1 James 5. *If any man want wisdom, let him ask it of God.* Jam.1.5.

Verse 6. *But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering: for he that wavereth, is like a wave of the Sea, driven with the winde, and tossed.* So that you see God looks to the manner, as well as to the matter of a performance.

2 You must pray regularly, according to the will of God.

3 Dependingly, resting upon Christs intercession.

4 Waitingly.

5 Preparedly; but these I shall pass by, because they do not so properly concern the point in hand.

6 We are commanded to pray earnestly, and fervently, and importunately; So *David* did, *Psal.*55.17. *I will pray and cry aloud, and he shall hear my voice.* Psal.55.17. A full place to this purpose is, *Rom.* 15.30. *Now, I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christs sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me.* Rom.15.30. The word in the Greek is very emphatical, it is the same word that is applied to Christ, when he was in an agony, when he sweat drops of blood. He beseecheth them to contend and strive in their prayers; we are to be as it were in an agony when we are in prayer. Prayer is not a little book-labour, it is not a lip-labour onely, but it is a raising up, and putting forth the heart and affections in the work. So, *Rom.* 12.12. *Be continuing, instant in prayer.* It is a metaphor taken from Dogs. A Dog of all creatures is the best able to endure hunger, he will run from place to place, and never leave till he hath got his prey: so you are to hunger after God, and after mercy, and not to rest satisfied, till God doth grant the mercy you stand in need of, pray and pray, and pray again, and fight till you overcome, pray till you get an answer. Another place is, *James* 5.16. *The effectuall fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.* The word in the Original is significant, Some expound it a working prayer; It may be interpreted a prayer well wrought in the heart, and so a prayer that comes from

συναγωνίζεσθαι. *Mecum certave*

Rom.12.12. τῇ προσευχῇ προσκαρτερεῖτε.

Rom.5.16. δέησις ἐνεργουμένη.

the heart. —A prayer wrought in us by the Spirit, and carried on by faith. Another place to the same purpose is, *Act.* 26.7. *Unto which promise our twelve Tribes instantly serving God.*—The word is rendered by some, continually, daily, constantly; but it signifies most properly a serving of God with the utmost of ones strength, to be as a man upon a rack, to use the very all of their power; or it may be it is borrowed from one that runs a race, wherein men stretch out their limbs to the utmost. The word is the same here that is used, *Acts.* 12.5. *Prayer was made without ceasing*, or (as it is in the margin of your book, and more agreeably to the Originall) *instant and earnest prayer was made for Peter.* The prayers of Gods people were so earnest, that they opened the prison-doors for him. So, *Colos.* 4.12. *Epaphras who is one of you a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers.*——So that you see, it is not every prayer that God is satisfied with, no nor Gods people neither; it is not every prayer that shall prevail with God; there must be importunity in it.

Acts 26.7. ἐν ἐκτενείᾳ.

Acts 12.5. προσευχὴ ἐκτενὴς.

Colos. 4.12. ἀγωνιζόμενος.

So much for the first reason.

Reason 2. 2 We must have this holy importunity in prayer, because there is much strength and importunity against thee, whenever thou goest upon thy knees. There is strength against you both from without and from within.

Gen. 15.11. 1 From without; There are the powers of darkness that stand against you, and resist you. As it was with *Abraham*, *Gen.* 15.11. When *Abraham* was sacrificing, fowles came down upon the sacrifice, but *Abraham drove them away.* *Deodate* saith, This is a signe that the Devils, those infernal spirits labour to disturbe us in holy duties; as the good Angels behold us in our assemblies, and rejoyce to see our order, so the wicked Angels labour to disturb us and molest us.

James 1.14. 2 There is strength against us from within. There is that in thy heart that will carry thee more violently from God, then the good motions in thee can bring thee to God; there is a forcible withdrawing of the heart from God, *James* 1.14. *Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed.* When you have no will to do good, even then you have a will

to

to do evil; nay, there are wills of the flesh, and lusts of the flesh; shall we not have half a will for God, when we have many wills for sin? You see therefore it is not without good reason that we should be thus importunate in prayer. Θελήματα σαρκὸς, ἐπιθυμίας σαρκὸς.

And so much for the fifth particular.

The sixth particular is this: *What are the reasons why so many people do want this holy importunity, that so many pray, and so few pray with that earnestnesse and eagernesse of heart and affection that is required?* Quest. Why so few importunate in Prayer?

I answer, that comes to passe for many reasons.

1 This comes to passe from the injections, and instigations of Satan. The Devil acts not onely powerfully, but also subtilly and craftily, he will endeavour to divert you from the performance of duty, he will perswade you to neglect it, if he can. But it may be thou wilt say, thou wilt direct thy prayer unto God, and thou wilt have thine eye fixed upon God. Why now Satan will fall in with you, he will jogge your arme, he will take off your eye from the mark, that you shall not be able to hit it. Thus he dealt with *Abraham*, as you heard before. Thus he dealt, *Job* 1.6. *Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them.* Reason 1. Job 1.6.

I am not ignorant that many Interpreters, by the sons of God do understand the Angels, because the Angels are called the sons of God, *Job.* 38.7. but it cannot be so taken here; I will give but one reason to prove it, because the place where the Angels are, is in heaven; and if so, then the Devil must be in heaven, which is by all denied; he never was in heaven since he was cast out of it. And therefore *Belaucius* saith, that this day was the Lords day, and by the sons of God are meant, the godly men, that lived in the time, and place where *Job* lived, the posterity of *Seth*. And you shall finde in Scripture this very appellation given to them, *Gen.* 6. 2. *The sons of God saw the daughters of men.* These sons of God must needs be men, and not Angels; and so they are to be understood in this place in *Job*, the people of God met together, and came before the Lord, Job 38.7.

and Satan came also among them, he came to hinder them and disturb them. So it was, *Zech.* 3. 1, 2. *And he shewed me Joshua the high Priest standing before the Angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him; And the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan, even the Lord that hath chosen* Jerusalem, *rebuke thee: is not this a firebrand plucked out of the fire?* You see how Satan laboured to divert the thoughts, and distract the heart of the high Priest in the performance of religious duties.

That is the first Reason.

2 This importunity is wanting in our prayers, when we know and allow our selves in any one sin, and let it lie upon our hearts unrepented of. *Hilderstom* gathers from the 51 *Psalm*, that all the while that *David* did lie in that sin of adultery, all the time that sin was unrepented of, the heart of *David* was shut up that he could not pray, as he was wont to do before, and as he did after he had repented of that sin, at which time he writ that Penitential Psalm. You had need look to your hearts, that there do not lie there any sin encouraged, and unrepented of; for be sure of this, if thy prayer do not make thee leave sinning, thy sin will make thee leave praying.

That is the second Reason of the want of importunity.

3 Another Reason is this, because many take unfit seasons for the performance of duty. It is the judgement of that learned and reverend man of God Master *Bolton*, that the taking of unfit seasons for the performance of prayer, doth more obstruct, and hinder this holy importunity in prayer, then all the suggestions and instigations of Satan.

Now there are three unfit seasons for the performance of this duty.

1 When the body is sleepy, and fit for nothing but to take its rest. A sleepy and sluggish temper, is a canker to eat out many sweet affections, *Cant.* 3. 1. *By night upon my bed I sought him, but I found him not.* Some Interpreters take occasion hence, to speak against late prayers.

2 Another unfit season is, when the heart is fill'd with worldly cares and distractions, and the incumbrances of this present life; many men are guilty of this, they will so clog themselves with

the cares of this life, that they cannot have a praying time free from them. Some men will be down upon their knees, before the things of this world are out of their mindes; and so they have no time to consider, or meditate, or to put the heart into a fit frame for that work. You know we are *to attend upon the Lord without distraction*, 1 *Cor.*7.35. It was the fault of those Jews in hearing, that when they came to hear the Word, *their hearts did go out after their covetousnes*, *Ezek.*33.31. That is another season unfit for prayer.

3 Another season is, when we are under passionate distempers. When tumultuous passions are up, holy affections are down, 1 *Tim.*2 8. *I will that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting*; to shew that where there is wrath, the duty of prayer cannot be performed in an acceptable manner. And of the same minde was the Apostle *Peter*; who therefore gives this counsel, 1 *Pet.*3.7. *Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers be not hindered.* The Apostle wisely foresaw, that if man and wife lived in discontent and trouble, then their prayers would be hindred; and therefore he adviseth them, to prevent the hinderance of their prayers, by avoiding occasions of discontent. And that is the third season, wherein people are unfit for prayer: so they are diverted from that fervency, and importunity they might have in their prayers. We should therefore chuse the fittest seasons for prayer. It is said of *Luther*, by *Vitus Theodorus*, who was present with him at *Coburge*, and many times heard him at his private prayers, in a letter of his to *Melanchthon*, That there was no day passed over his head, wherein *Luther* did not spend three houres at the least in prayers; and those (not houres that he could best spare, unseasonable houres, but) such houres as were the fittest for his study. And that was a reason, that *Luther* was very importunate in his prayers, as the same Authour informs us; Good God, with how much reverence did I hear him pray! With how much boldnes and confidence! &c. And on the contrary, one reason why men have so little of this holy importunity, is for want of taking fit seasons for the work.

4 Ano-

Reason 4.

4. Another reason of the want of this holy importunity is, the disuse and neglect of prayer in your Christian course. Many there are that pray sometimes, and leave off praying again; now this doth very much dull mens affections in prayer. There is a Proverb, *Use makes perfection*; I am sure it is so in the duty of prayer; let a Christian pray often, and he will come to pray well, and to pray with much enlargednesse of heart; and let him leave off prayer, and he will finde his heart exceedingly straitened. Take a Key, if you use it frequently, it will be bright; but if you lay it aside, it will soon grow rusty; thus will it be with a mans heart, use prayer much, keep it close to the performance of duty, it is the way to have thy heart bright. Let this Key of prayer, which doth open heaven be used, it will be kept bright, and thy prayer will enter into heaven; but let this Key of prayer be laid aside, and do not thou often use it, and it will quickly grow rusty again; thy prayers and performances will not be able to enter heaven, and thou wilt not be able to perform duty in that manner that God expecteth. If thou dost not watch unto prayer, with all carefulnesse, thou wilt lose thy zeal and fervent affection, and thy holy desires after God in duty. As it is with a Pump, use it every day, and water will come; but if you forbear the use of it two or three dayes, water will neither come so easily nor so plentifully. If you do not pump out your holy desires every day, they will quickly flag and grow remisse. Physicians observe, concerning the teeth, that that side of the teeth that is not used, is most subject to rheumes and distillations. That heart that is not inured to prayer and holy duties, is most subject to Satans instillations and suggestions. This is the fourth reason.

Reason 5.

5 The fifth reason why this importunity is wanting, is this, because men tie themselves to prescript formes of prayer. I do not say, that it is unlawful to use set forms of prayer; we finde that Jesus Christ himself used a form, Matth. 26.39. Christ went & said, *Father, if it be possible, let this cup passe from me.* Vers. 42. *He went again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not passe from me, thy will be done* Vers. 44. *He went away again, and prayed, saying the same words.* To shew, that it is lawful to use set forms of prayer, but not alwayes. You are to strive for

Matth. 26.39.

the

the spirit of prayer. A man that will use his crutches constantly, shall go lame all the dayes of his life. You live in an age wherein Religion is much professed, and the Gospel is fully made known. Do not content your selves with forms, labour for the spirit of prayer, thereby you may go to God, and spread before him your wants and necessities, and beg those mercies that are most suitable to your wants and exigences. Forms indeed will teach you to beg pardon for sin, in general; but you must beg pardon for particular sins. You must not only beg mercy in general but you must also beg those particular mercies that are most suitable to you; and this set forms are defective in, which yet is the main work in prayer. He that ties himself alwayes to another mans form, will not be able to pray alone, but weakly, and coldly, and formally.

This is the fifth Reason.

Reason 6.

6 Another ground of this importunity, is a giving way to an accustomed continuance in a sleight and careless performance of duties; this enervates the affections and emasculates the spirits; what men are accustomed to, that they get an habit of, so that they cannot do the contrary. As a Carriers horse, that is used to a dull and slow pace, cannot go out of it. The lessening of Acts makes Habits more remisse. That is the last reason. And so much shall suffice for answer to the sixth Question.

The

The fifth Sermon.

LUKE 11. 8.

I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity, he will give unto him as many as he needeth.

THE fourth particular is this; By what helps may a man attein to this holy importunity in prayer?

For answer, I shall lay down six or seven Theological helps, by which a man may come to attein this holy importunity.

1 Possess thine heart with an awful fear of the Almighty God. This was the ground of *Davids* importunity, as you may see, *Psal.5.verse* 3. he saith, *My voice shalt thou hear in the morning.*——And in the seventh Verse, you will finde this holy fear did lie at the bottom; *But as for me, I will come into thine house, in the multitude of thy mercy; and in thy fear will I worship towards thine holy Temple.* *David* came to duty, with a strong impression of Gods greatness and dreadfulness. So it is the advice of the Apostle, that if we would serve God acceptably, we must do it *with reverence and godly fear*, *Heb.*12.28. That fore-cited Author, *Vitus Theodorus* writes concerning *Luther*, That he prayed with so much confidence, as if he had been speaking with his friend and familiar, and yet with so much reverence, as one that considered the great distance between God and him. I may allude to that place, *Isai.*60.5. though the words are spoken to another purpose, *Thy heart shall fear, and be enlarged.* An holy fear breeds an holy care. If a man once comes to this, that he is fearless of God, he will quickly be careless in prayer, *Job* 15.4. *Yea, thou castest off fear, and restrainest Prayer before God.* A man that doth cast off the fear of God, doth soon cease to pray unto God: He that fears God most, that man will certainly pray to God best. That is the first help.

Isa.5.3.

Tanta fiducia ut cum amico, tanta reverentiâ ut cum Deo.

Job.15.4.

2 Ano-

2 Another help or means to get this holy importunity is this. To recollect thy thoughts by holy meditation, before thou commest to this weighty duty of prayer to God; and upon this ground we finde meditation and prayer to be put together. *Psal.*5.1,2. *Give ear to my words, ô Lord, and consider my meditation, give ear unto my prayer, ô God, and my King; for unto thee will I pray.* *Davids* prayer you see is ushered in with meditation. The same word in the Hebrew signifies both to meditate, and to pray. You finde concerning *Isaac*, *Gen.*24.26. *Isaac went out into the fields to meditate*; some read it, *to pray*, others translate; It is likely he did both first meditate, and then pray: Be much employed in the work of meditation, if you would have your hearts much enlarged in prayer. Meditate into whose presence you come; what a glorious God he is, before whom you are to appear.

2 *Help.*

Psal.5.1,2.

שׂוח

Gen.24.26.

2 Meditate in whose Name you are to come, and to pray by whom you must have access to the throne of grace.

3 Meditate what chief mercies you want, and are to beg, what grace you would have strengthened, what lusts you would have quelled, what doubts you would have satisfied, what sins you would have pardoned, in a word, what blessings you would have God to bestow upon you. The meditation of these things must needs give a man more scope, and stir up a mans affections in prayer.

3 If you would get this holy importunity, you must recall your thoughts from worldly and distracting cares, when you come to prayer. The Apostle therefore doth exhort the *Corinthians*, 1 *Cor.*7. to free themselves from, and rid their hands of the cares of the World, and he gives this as a reason, that they may attend upon the Lord without distraction. The cares of the World will eat out that good that is in the hearts of men, will rob a man of that freedom and enlargement, that otherwise he might have in prayer. *Anselme*, as he was walking in the fields, saw a shepherds boy tie a stone to a birds leg, and as the bird sought to flie up, ever and anon the stone pulled it down again. The spiritual interpretation that he partly made, and that we may make, is this; when the soul would mount aloft in prayer, and grow fervent, the cares of the world pluck it down, and

3 *Help.*

1 Cor.7.

cool it. And therefore you must labour to free your selves from these incumbrances. You must do as *Abraham* did, when he went to sacrifice, he left his servants and cattell at the bottom of the hill; so when you go to offer to God the sacrifices of prayer, you must get above the impediments and distractions of this present life. That is the third Help.

4 *Help.* Another way to get this holy importunity, is to watch the heart in prayer. Col. 4. 2. *Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving.* There is a watching to prayer, and a watching in praying. A watching to prayer is, when a man watcheth his heart, and sees that he doth not omit duties; and there is a watching in prayer, of which I am now speaking. Now there are four enemies, that a man must watch against in prayer.

1 Watch against drowsiness of body. This is a great impediment of prayer, and we have great need to watch against it.

2 Watch against a deadness and dulness of spirit, against a flat and low temper, that is a great hinderance of importunity.

3 Watch against Satanical suggestions; Satan is always ready to assault thee, he watcheth to disturb and molest you in your prayers, you had need watch to counterwork him.

4 You must watch from secular distractions. All these adversaries you must watch against, and that is the way to get this holy importunity into your hearts.

5 *Help.* 5 If you would get this holy importunity, you must labour to stir up all your affections, when you come to pray. This you Psal. 103. 1. finde was the practice of holy *David*, *Psal.* 103. 1. *Bless the Lord ô my soul, and all that is within me praise his holy Name.* See how this good man doth muster together all the faculties of his soul, how he calls up all his strength, all that he is or can do to set forth the Name of God. So the Apostle *Peter*, in his first 1 Pet. 1. 13. Epistle *Chap* 1. *Verse* 13. exhorts those to whom he writes, *to gird up the loins of their mindes.* A Christian going towards heaven, is compared to a man that is going a journey; now a man that Luke 17. 8. is going a journey, he girds up his clothes together about his loins, that nothing may hinder him in his journey. To this the Apostle alludes, when he bids them gird up their loins. So the like

like you have, *Luke* 17.8. *Gird up thy self, and serve me.* It is an expression of a Master to his Servant. God is our Master, we are his Servants, we are to do his work while we be in the World. To that end let us gird up our loins, let us gather our affections together, that we may be the more fit for, and the more vigorous in the work. A discinct and ungirt minde is not fit for prayer; in ancient times at the first assemblings, and Church-meetings, the Deacons cried, Let us pray, Let us atttend. There are many that pray, and do not attend to Prayer, many pray, as if they prayed not; if therefore we would pray, indeed, we must attend to it, we must stir up all that is with us, to call upon the Name of the Lord.

Oremus, attendamus.

6 If you will get this holy importunity, then you must store your hearts with fulness of matter, when thou goest to paayer; It is emptiness of Spirit that causeth deadness of heart.

6 Help.

7 If you would get this holy importunity, bemoan the deadness and dulness of thy heart. This was the course that holy *David* took, *Psal.*38.9. *My desires, ô Lord, are before thee, and my groaning is not hid from thee.* So it was the practise of the Church, *Isa.*63.17. *O Lord, why hast thou made us to erre from thy ways, and hardened our hearts from thy fear.* So it was the way that *Ephraim* went in, *Jer.*31.18. *I have heard* Ephraim *bemoaning himself. Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke.*——

7 Help.

Isai.63.17.

Jer.31.18.

Verse 19. *Surely after that I was turned, I repented, and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even confounded; because I did bear the reproach of my youth.* God doth love to heare his people mourning over, and bewailing their wants and weaknesses, and that is one necessary requisite in an acceptable Prayer. Bewail therefore thy dulness, consider that prayer without this holy importunity, is like a messenger without legs, as an Arrow without feathers, an Advocate without a tongue. Saint *Jerom* complained very much of his distractions & dulness in prayer, and chid himself runs: What doest thou think that *Jonah* prayed thus when he was in the Whales belly, or *Daniel* when he was among the Lions, or the Thief when he was upon the Crois? Bemoan your want

Siccine ut asinus orasse Jonam, sic Danielem inter leones, sic latronem in cruce?

want of importunity, if you would get this importunity. And so much shall suffice for the helps or means to get importunity.

And so I have dispatcht all those particulars propounded in the beginning, I now come to the Application of the point.

Use of Caution.

I shall apply it by way of Caution, to prevent several mistakes in the world about this holy importunity. And there are two sorts of mistakes, there are some that think they have this importunity when they have it not. And there are others that think they have not this importunity, when indeed they have it. Both these mistakes I must labour to rectifie.

1 Caution. To those that think they have importunity upon false grounds.

1 There are some that think they have this importunity, when they have it not. Every man by nature is proud of his own parts and abilities, and apt to think that he hath more grace then indeed he hath. And here there are four mistakes, or if you will four grounds of this great mistake. Many conceit they have importunity, when indeed they have it not.

1 Because they are fluent in their expressions in prayer.

2 Because they have some stirring of the affections in prayer.

3 Because God gives them the mercy they ask.

4 Because they pray by heart and not by book: Now all these are false grounds, and therefore I shall endevour to disprove them in order.

First false ground confuted.

The first ground of this deceit is this. There are some that conceive they have this importunity, because they have multitude of words, and variety of expressions in prayer.

Now this is no just ground for a man to conclude, that he hath this holy importunity in four cases.

1 In case expressions come from the strength of natural gifts, and parts, and not from saving grace. A man may have a strong memory, and volubility of tongue, and good natural abilities, and yet all this while fall far short of this gracious importunity.

2 In case thou art full in expression, but empty in affection. There are many men whose words do out-slip their hearts, and their expressions exceed their affections. So did they, *Isa.* 29.13, *Forasmuch as this people draw neer me with their mouth, and with their*

their lips do honour me; but have removed their heart far from me. Some men are like boiling water, when it boils fastest, and boils out of the top, then there is nothing at the bottom; All their prayers are at the top, in their mouth, and not in their heart and affections. Their affections do not carry equipage with their words.

3 In case thy importunate expressions be more used in company, then in secret, it is a sign thou hast not this holy importunity, but it comes from popular applause. It is not so with the people of God, Christ speaks to his people, *Cant.* 8.13. *Thou that dwellest in the gardens, the companions hearken to thy voice, cause me to hear it;* to shew, that they should not onely pray, and be importunate when the companions hearken to their voice, when they are in company, but even then when no eye sees them, when no eare heares them, when none is present, but God alone; God expects that we should pray in secret, as well as in company.

4 In case thy fluency of expressions do make thee conceited of thy self, and of thy gifts, and to slight the gifts of other men, this is an argument thou hast not this holy importunity; for that makes a man humble, and low in his own eyes. When a man comes to despise other men, and exalt himself above his brethren, this is a token thy importunity comes not from a right principle. And so I have disproved the first false ground, upon which many conceit they have this importunity.

A second false ground confuted.

2 Another false ground upon which men conceive they have this importunity, when they have not, is this; Because they finde in themselves some stirrings in their affections in prayer to God. But this is no just ground for that opinion in these cases.

1 In case thine affections are more stirred up, for the removal of affliction upon thee, then corruption within thee. As it was with the Mariners in *Jonah*, they cried mightily unto God, but what was it for? not that they might be delivered from their sins and corruptions, but that God would bring them safe out of that tempest wherein they were.

2 In case thine affections be kindled by a false Principle, as by

by popular applause, or vain-glory, & not by the Spirit of God.

3 In case thine affections are more drawn out after pardoning mercy, then subduing grace. A man whose conscience is awakened, may be so far rouzed with the fear of hell, that he may be very earnest to have sin pardoned, out of a meer principle of self-love.

4 If these stirrings be fading. There are many that have a flushing in their affections, that have no standing affections in their hearts. They are like a man in a Fever, that when the distemper is on him, he may be stronger by far than he is in his ordinary course; now this is not the natural strength of the man, but onely the violence of his distemper; and the decay of nature? Just so the violence that some men have, doth not argue a strength of grace, but a decrease of grace rather. And so much for the second ground of that mistake.

A third ground confuted.

A third ground upon which many mistake, is this: Because God gives them the mercy they ask: Now they think God would not give them what they ask, if he did not hear and accept their prayers: But neither is this a good [illegible] and that for these reasons.

1 God may give you mercy, not as a return of prayer, but as a fruit of his general providence, whereby he doth take care for all his creatures; God giveth meat even to the Ravens that cry unto him. The Lord gives to every thing their meat in due season. God hears the cries of the meanest of all his creatures in the time of need.

2 God may hear thee, and grant thy request in wrath, and not in mercy; So it was with the Israelites; they were weary of that government that God had set over them, and they were very importunate to have a King; Nothing would satisfie them but a King. They refused to hear the voice of *Samuel*, and said, Nay, but we will have a King. Well, God hears their request, and grants it, and gives them a King. Might they thence conclude, surely their prayers were accepted of God, because God did give them what they desired? No, God tells us the quite contrary, *Hosea* 13.11. *I gave thee a King in mine anger.* So in the 78. *Psalm.* The *Israelites* were very desirous of meat; God heard them, *Verse* 29,30,31. *So they did eat and were filled,*

filled, for he gave them their own desire. They were not estranged from their lust; but while the meat was in their mouthes, the wrath of God came upon them, and slue the fattest of them, and smote down the chosen men of Israel; So that Gods giving of a man the mercy he wants, is no argument to a man, to conclude that God accepts his prayers.

3 If God hath heard thee, it may be it is in temporal favours, but not in spiritual mercies. God gives thee a temporal mercy, but he denies thee spiritual mercies. It may be thou hast begg'd riches, and God hath granted thee this request, to make thee rich in the world; it may be thou hast desired honour, and thou art raised to places of honour; But remember thou do'st beg Christ, thou do'st beg grace and glory; if God doth not give thee these, thou shalt never see the face of God; and consider, what will all these do thee good? They will but feed thee fat for the day of slaughter, and make thee a sweet morsel for wormes and Devils. Now consider, what benefit this will be to thee, to have riches, pleasures, and worldly contentments, and they prove a snare for thee. So then it is no just ground for a man to conclude that he hath prayed aright, because God hath answered him. That is the third ground.

A fourth ground of mens presumption, of the goodness and acceptableness of their prayers is this; they pray by heart, and not by book, they use not set forms, they pray *ex tempore*. But this also is but a false ground, as appears by these considerations. A fourth ground confuted.

1 It is possible, and usual too, for men to pray without book, and yet without heart too. A man may pray a third way, he may pray, and yet neither pray with books, nor with heart, he may pray by the strength of naturall parts, as I told you even now.

2 A man may pray without a form, and yet make but a formall prayer. A formall prayer is not to use a form of words; for that Jesus Christ did, he prayed three times, saying the same words. A man may possibly use a form of words, and yet not be formall. And on the other side, a man may be formall, & yet not use a form of words; that is, he may pray, and yet not have his heart and affections wrought upon in that prayer.

3 Prayer

3 Prayer is not a work of the memory, invention or expreſſion, but a work of the heart. Prayer doth not conſiſt in variety of phraſes or change of the method, an expreſſion uſed in prayer, but a work on the affections. God doth not account that to be a prayer that doth not come from the heart, and is not accompanied with the heart; And therefore you finde this expreſſion concerning the Saints prayers formerly: *Hannah* poured out her ſoul before the Lord; and ſo the Pſalmiſt, he is ſaid to poure out his heart; and the *Iſraelites* are ſaid to poure out their hearts like water before the Lord. So that this proves to be a falſe bottom.

And ſo much for the firſt uſe of Caution.

The ſixth Sermon.

LUKE 11. 8.

I ſay unto you, Though he will not riſe and give him, becauſe he is his friend, yet becauſe of his importunity, he will give unto him as many as he needeth.

2 Caution. To thoſe that think they have not importunity when they have.

THis may be for Caution to the godly, to prevent the miſtakes of thoſe, that have this importunity, and think they have not; Yet here alſo they have ſome ſeeming Reaſons. I ſhall name them, and withall anſwer them.

1 Reaſon confuted.

Their firſt Reaſon is. Others pray better then I, ſaith a godly man, Others perform duties with more inlargedneſs; Now this reaſoning is not good.

For, 1 It may be thoſe that thou apprehendeſt to pray better then thou, are of longer ſtanding, and larger experience in the wayes of God then thou art. God doth not expect any more from a man, but according to that meaſure of grace that he gives the man, and according to his growth and ſtanding in grace.

grace. *Paul* was not at all discouraged, because *Epenetus was the first-fruits of* Achaia *unto Christ*, Rom. 16.5. nor at *Andronicus* and *Junia*, *that were of note among the Apostles, and in Christ before him*, *Vers.* 7. And if *Paul* was not discouraged, why shouldest thou be discouraged to see other Christians out-strip thee? it may be they are of longer standing then thou.

2 It may be thou doest judge and compare thy self with others, at a great disadvantage. As first, it may be thou doest compare thy self, and thy praying in secret, with the praying of others in publike; Now this is very disadvantageous; for in publike men have not onely inward, but also outward incouragements, and so thorough the corruption that is in all our hearts, they are more drawn forth at that time then in secret.

2 It may be thou doest compare their expression with thine affection; it may be there is more in thy affections, then in all the multitude of their expressions. Thou art not to compare thy affections with the multitude of other mens words.

3 It may be thou dost compare thy self with others, when they are at the best and highest, and thou at the worst and lowest. There is a great difference betwixt a man and himselfe, at severall times, now you judge unequally, if you compare your selfe in that manner.

3 In some cases this may be no discouragement to thee; as,

1 If thou art weaker in natural gifts. Though good affections flow from grace, yet good expressions proceed from the goodnesse of natural abilities.

2 In case thou art not of as long standing in Religion.

3 If thou hast lesser time and opportunities for prayer, by reason of necessary cares and encumbering employments. When *Jonah* was entered into the ship there was a great storme, insomuch that the ship was ready to sink: now all the Mariners were at prayer, every man cryed to his God, but *Jonah* was fast asleep; now one would have thought, that *Jonah* had been a most stupid man; but the reason was the greatnesse of his journey, a little before, which caused him to be so heavie to sleep. It may be a man that hath lesse grace then thou may pray better then thou, because he is not troubled with

these worldly incumbrances, that thou art necessarily ingaged in.

4 God doth not distribute gifts and graces to all alike, God hath not appointed that all men should grow in grace alike. To this purpose I may apply, *Nehem.* 11. 17. *Mattaniah the son of* Micha, *the son of* Zabdi, *the son of* Asaph *was the principal to begin the thanksgiving in prayer, and* Bakbukiah *the second among his brethren, and* Abda *the son of* Shammuz——the third. God doth not intend that all should be alike in grace, or gifts; God hath his first, second, and third; one may fall short of another, and yet all have truth of grace, yea, all have some growth in grace. Another may pray better, and yet thou pray well; Another may pray more affectionately, and yet thou pray as acceptably in the sight of God: so much for answer to the first reason.

A second Reason confuted.

2 Many a poor soul may say, I can remember since I could pray better, and more largely. Now if I could pray better formerly then now, I am now grown remiss, and want this holy importunity. But this is no sound reason; for

1 It may be thou hadst formerly more affection, but less judgement, less experience, less spiritualness in thy prayers. It may be now thou art more sound in knowledge, thou makest a more inward progress in holiness; thou canst now make a more inward prayer to God, thou hast now more inward communion with God. Now if this be so, thou hast no cause to be discouraged. God loves a judicious prayer, as well as a large and affectionate prayer; you see what you want one way, you make up another way. A young Carpenter gives more blows, and makes more chips, but an old and experienced workman doth the most and best work. A young Musician can play more quickly and nimbly upon an Instrument, but an old Musician hath more skill.

2 It may be when thou hadst more affections in prayer, thou hadst more sin in prayer, more pride in thy gifts, more dependance upon thy duties, more censoriousness of others, and many other corruptions that did accompany thy prayers, and thy affectionateness in them. Now though thou hast less affections, yet those other corruptions are in great part eaten out.

3 It may be thou hast not now so many helps and opportunities

nities to keep up thine heart, to stir up thine affections in prayer, as thou hadst formerly. It may be thou didst formerly live under the teachings of an able godly Minister. Now thou hast lost that opportunity. And so there are several other helps, that peradventure are now taken away from thee.

4 Though it is true thou art abated, and thou didst pray better formerly then now, yet ought not this to be matter of discouragement to thee.

1 If it doth not proceed from a voluntary carelesness.

2 If it be not accompanied with hardness and insensibleness.

3 If it be not continued in with lazines and contentedness. And so much for answer to the second reason.

3 Another ground of doubting to the people of God is this: They complain they have not those inlarged expressions in prayer, which Gods people use to have. For answer, consider these things:

A third Reason confuted.

1 This hath many times been the case of Gods own people, that they have wanted expressions, they could not finde a vent for their affections. Thus it was with *Hannah*, she spake in her heart, but she was not able to express her self. So it was with holy *David*, *Psal.*77.4. *I am so troubled that I cannot speak*, and yet in the first Verse of that Psalm, he tells us he *cried unto the Lord with his voice*. Here was an heart full of prayer, though he wanted utterance.

2 It is better to have affections without expressions, then expressions without affections. God looks more to the desires of the heart then the words of the mouth. It may be what thou wantest of expression, is made up in affection.

3 It may be what is wanting in words, is made up in life; as thou art defective in expression, so thou makest a recompence in conversation; and that is the best expression that can be. It is much better to live a prayer then to express a prayer. It is good to pray for grace, but it is better to live a life of grace. It is good to pray against sin, but it is better to live against sin.

And so much for answer to the third doubt.

A fourth ground of doubting is this: Many a disconsolate Christian is apt to say, I am troubled with wandring thoughts; with deadness and dulness of heart in prayer.

A fourth Reason confuted.

I confeſs thy caſe is ſad, and to be lamented for, and it is juſt matter of humiliation: Yet even here is matter of comfort.

1 If thou do'ſt what thou canſt, to free thy ſelf from wandrings before thou comeſt to pray.

2 If thou do'ſt what thou canſt to reſiſt theſe wandrings when you are come before God in prayer.

If you be ſenſible of theſe wandrings afterward. If you can ſay, you do theſe three things, your wandrings ſhall never be laid to your charge.

And thus I have done with both theſe Uſes of Caution. And ſo I have done with the principal Doctrine, which was this, *That an holy importunity, and earneſtneſs of ſpirit, is a condition required in the prayers of Gods people, if they expect returns thereunto.*

There is another conſiderable Doctrine yet behinde, taken from the amplification of the conceſſion: He asked but three loaves; *but becauſe of his importunity, he gave him as many as he needed.*

Doct. 4. God is better then our prayers.

The Obſervation thence is this; *That when the heart is importunate in begging mercy, God uſually gives us more then we pray for.*

In the handling of this Doctrine,

1 I ſhall prove it by Scripture-inſtances.

2 I ſhall lay down the reaſons of it.

3 I ſhall anſwer ſome Objections, and caſes of conſcienre; and ſo I ſhall come to application.

1 I ſhall prove it by Scripture-inſtances.

Petiit Filium, accepit Prophetam.

1 You have the inſtance of *Hannah*, 1 *Sam.* 1. She begg'd a ſon with much importunity, being a woman of a ſorrowful ſpirit, for want of a ſon; Well, God returns her an anſwer. *Chemnitius* obſerves, that *Hannah* asked a ſon, and God gave her a Prophet. She begg'd a ſon, God gave a gracious ſon; a ſon greatly beloved of God. She asked a ſingle mercy, and God gave her a double bleſſing.

Another inſtance you have in *Abraham*, *Gen.* 17. *Abraham* prayed, *O that* Iſhmael *might live in thy ſight.* Well, what anſwer doth God return? That you have *Verſe* 19. *Sarah thy wife ſhall bear thee a ſon indeed, and thou ſhalt call his name* Iſaac, *and I will eſtabliſh my covenant with him for an everlaſting covenant, and with*

with his seed after him. It was *Abrahams* desire that *Ishmael* might live. Now God, not only grants that, but he grants him a better mercy.

Another instance you have in the Canaanitish woman, *Matthew* 15. who did importunately beg of Christ, the life and health of her daughter. Christ answered her thus; *Be it unto thee even as thou wilt.*

Now if you ask, what is the reason why God deals thus with his people? I answer,

Reason 1. 1 This proceeds from the largeness and greatness of Gods power, and the riches and freeness of his grace towards us; *Eph.* 3.20. *Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly, above all that we are able to ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.* A man may ask of another man, and it may be receive; but then he must not ask again: but herein appears the power and ability, the goodness and bounty of God; if we ask of him once or twice, he is a God that is able to give, not according to our asking onely, but above what we ask; and not onely above what we can ask, but above what we can ask or think The words are so full, that they can not well be expressed, God doth *more then excessively.* God hath not onely a fulnes of abundance, but of redundancy; not onely of plenty, but bounty; he is better then our prayers.

ὑπὲρ ἐκ περισσοῦ.

Reason 2. 2 God will do this, to relieve his people, and to supply their spiritual wants. Among the wants of Gods people, this is one, that *we do not know what we need, nor what we should pray for as we ought, Rom.* 8.26. Therefore God supplies our wants, not onely in what we ask, but in what we want, though we do not ask it, nor pray for it.

So much for the Reasons; I come now to answer some Objections.

Object. 1. But some may say, What priviledge hath a godly man more then a wicked man, to have more to be given him then he doth ask, seeing we read of wicked men that *they do prosper in the world, and have more then heart can wish? Psal.* 73. I answer,

Answ. 1. 1 It is true in temporal mercies: God may give men more then the godly, and more then their heart can wish; but God doth not give them spiritual mercies: As we may see in *Balaam:* God

God gave *Balaam* honours and riches, but *Balaam* cried out, *O that I might die the death of the righteous!* This God did not grant him. So, many wicked men do say in a general way, *Lord, pardon my sin*; God doth not hear them. It may be a childe of God may ask of God temporal mercies, and God will give him spiritual mercies; this is more then he did ask, and that much better then he gives to wicked men.

2 Though God doth give unto wicked men more then their hearts can wish, yet God doth not give it as any return of prayer, but onely as fruits of general and common Providence, as they are his creatures, whom he will preserve.

3 God may give wicked men more then their hearts can wish, and this is not in mercy, but in wrath. They may receive mercies, but not as mercies, not in mercy. And there are four demonstrations when God hears a man in wrath.

Concedit iratus, quod negat propitius.

1 When he asks any thing of that is sinful in its own nature; as the denial of it is an act of mercy, so the grant of it is a fruit of Gods anger. God doth many times give those things in his anger, which he denies when he is well pleased. God will not hear his own people according to their wils, but according to his own will. It is in this case, as it is with a father, when his childe, for want of knowledge, asks a knife of him, by which he may cut his fingers; the father will not give him the knife, except it be in wrath: So a man may ask mercies at the hand of God, and it may be God will give them in wrath to cut themselves with them.

2 If you ask those things of God, which though they are not sinful in their own nature; yet if thy asking of these lawful things be to an unlawful end, God will deny these in mercy; and when he gives them it is in wrath. As if thou desirest temporal mercies to abuse them to drunkenness, or to live in any other sin and wickedness; if God give thee those mercies, 'tis as a testimony of his wrath to thee. So it was in the 78 *Psalm*, *v.*18. *They tempted God in their hearts, and asked meat for their lust.* There was the end of their desires. They desired a lawful thing for unlaw ends; But what followed? The wrath of God: *For while the meat was in their mouthes, the wrath of God came upon them*, *Verse* 30, 31.

3 If

3 If you ask any thing of God, and he gives it in wrath, you may know by this; if it be an occasion of sin to thee, it is given thee in wrath. So it was with the *Israelites*, even now mentioned, the meat that God gave them proved an occasion of sin, *Verse* 32.——*They sinned still, and believed not his wondrous works.* When the mercies you enjoy become fuel to your lusts, those mercies are accompanied with the curse and wrath of God; and this using of mercies will turn to the aggravation of wrath.

4 Mercies are given thee in wrath, when the enjoyment of them hinders thee from the receit of greater mercies from God. Thus it was with the Devils, *Matth.*8.31,32. They besought Christ that they might go into the Herd of Swine: Christ granted them that; he let them enter into Swine, that they might not enter into men. When the giving of temporal mercies hinders thee from the receit of spiritual mercies, they are given in wrath. There are many men to whom God gives temporal mercies, they have riches in abundance, pleasure at will, every thing they can desire; but these mercies take off their thoughts and affections from better things; by getting these they lose Christ, and grace, immortality, and eternal happiness. Now in these cases, though God doth give mercies, yet they are given in wrath; and so notwithstanding this Objection, the priviledge of Gods people, is much greater then the priviledge of wicked men.

But it may be further objected and enquired; If this be so, that mercies are given to wicked men in wrath, and by a common Providence, *How may I know when mercies come to me as returns of prayers?*

Quest. When mercies are returns of prayers.

Now I shall answer that in these particulars.

Answ. 1.

1 Mercies are returns of prayer, when the receiving of mercy is a means to quicken the heart to beg for other mercies at the hands of God: when the mercie shall make thee more to love prayer, more to use prayer. This you finde proved by Davids experience, *Psal.* 116. 2. *Because he hath heard my voice, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live.* You see here, because God had heard *Davids* prayer, & given him the mercy he beg'd, he makes it an argument & an engagement to himself to pray as long as he lived. So that to cõtinue prayer is a means to get more mercy; and

and the leaving off of prayer when you have a mercy, is a means to loſe that which you have obteined at the hands of God. But as for the wicked, it is not ſo with them. Mercies received onely from a common, or general providence, have no ſuch efficacy, as you may ſee, *Job* 21.7,8. &c. there *Job* tells you,——*the wicked live, become old, yea, mighty in power: Their ſeed is eſtabliſhed in their ſight with them, and their off-ſpring before their eyes. Their houſes are ſafe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them. Their Bull gendereth, and faileth not, their Cow calveth, and caſteth not her Calf.* And ſo he goes on, deſcribing that happy condition that wicked men were in, and how God followed them with mercy after mercy. Well; what was the effect of this? Did this engage them to call upon God? Did this make them in love with prayer? No, it had a quite contrary effect, *Verſe* 14. *Therefore they ſay unto God, Depart from us; for we deſire not the knowledge of thy wayes.* And, *Verſ.*15. *What is the Almighty, that we ſhould ſerve him? And what profit ſhould we have if we pray unto him?*

2 Mercies that are given as returns of prayer, do not onely make a man conſider that they are from God, but draw the heart to God, and put a man upon employing them in the ſervice, and to the honour of God. This we finde to be the temper of *Hannah*, 1 *Sam.*1.27,28. *Hannah* had prayed for a childe, God gave her a ſon. Now what doth ſhe with this mercy? Obſerve, *For this childe I prayed, and the Lord hath granted my petition,——Therefore have I lent him to the Lord; as long as he liveth.* Seeing God hath heard my prayer, and granted my requeſt, therefore I will give this mercy to God to be employed in this ſervice. So 1 *John* 3.22. *And whatſoever we ask, we receive of him, becauſe we keep his commandements, and do thoſe things that are pleaſing in his ſight.* You ſee it is made an evidence, that what we receive is received as an anſwer to our askings; becauſe we make thoſe mercies helps to obedience to keep Gods commandements. But now mercies that come from a common providence, do not draw out the heart towards God; they rather draw them out towards ſin; as it was in the fore-mentioned *Iſraelites*, *Pſal.*78. though God did give them their hearts deſire, yet were they not eſtranged from their luſt.

Mer-

3 Mercies come from God as returns of prayer, when they make you more to rejoyce in the God that hears your prayers, and gives you the mercy, then in the mercy you receive from God. Thus you finde it was in *Hannah*, she asked a son, and God gave her a son, yet she saith, 1 *Sam.* 2. 1. *My heart rejoyceth in the Lord.* God gave her a son, she rejoyced in that mercy, but she rejoyced more in the God that gave it. So it was with *David*, *Psal.* 85. 6. *Wilt thou not revive us again, that thy people may rejoyce in thee?* We will not rejoyce chiefly in the mercy, but in thee. But on the contrary, those that receive mercies out of the basket of common Providence, they rejoyce more in the mercy then in the God of mercy; they rejoyce in their wealth, and glory, in the multitude of their riches; but as for God they bid him depart from them; they cannot rejoyce in God.

The seventh Sermon.

Luke 11. 8.

I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity, he will give him as many as he needeth.

4 Mercies that are the fruits of prayer, are known by this, He that hath them, ascribes them not to his own industry, but to the grace and mercy of God. Thus it was with *Samson*, *Judges* 15. when he was ready to die for thirst, he prayed unto the Lord, and God clave an hollow place in the jaw-bone, and gave him water. Now *Samson* calls the name of the place *Enhakkore, the well of him that prayed:* he ascribes it to the return of his prayers; to that assistance that God gave him to pray. So *Hannah* ascribed her mercy to God, not to her self. But now a wicked man that receives mercies from Gods general providence, his language is, This I have laboured for; this I have ventured my life for; this my friends left me; this I got by my forecast, providence, and industry: thus they sacrifice to their own nets; but seldome say, This is the return of Prayers, this is the gift of God.

עין הקורא

5 That mercie that is given as a return of prayer, is enjoyed with more inward quiet, and contentment of minde, then when it is given in by generall providence. When *Eli* told *Hannah* that she should have a son, and that her prayer was heard, she had so much inward joy & contentment of mind, that it is said, *Hannah went away rejoycing; and her countenance was no more sad:* The consideration of that made her very much to rejoyce. The reason is, because mercies that are given in as returns of prayer, they are

are given in with a blessing, and inward quietnesse and contentment of minde. The mercies that God gives his own people, he gives them with joy and comfort, *Prov.* 10. 22. *The blessing of the Lord maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow to it.* You read, 1 *Chron.* 4. 10. *And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, O that thou wouldest blesse me indeed, and enlarge my Coasts, and that thy hand might be with me, and that thou wouldest keep me from evill, that it may not grieve me.* *Jabez* knew that it was the manner of God, when he gave blessings as returns of prayer, not to adde griefe to it. *Isaac*, he prayed for his wife, and God gave her to him to be a great comfort to him. It may be wicked men have wives and no content with them, but sorrow added to them, because they did not pray for them as *Isaac* did; they have children, but sorrow with them; and abundance of riches, and sorrow added to that; and all because they have not the mercies as returns of prayer. The mercies that are given in a way of generall providence, usually are accompanied with vexatiousnesse and discontent, snares and sorrows mingled with the mercies. So it was, *Psal.* 106. 15. *He gave them their requests, but he sent leanness into their souls.* God gives wicked men indeed their requests; but how is it, with a blessing, and with content? No, no such matter, they have a curse with it. You know *Saul* gave *Michal* to *David* to be a snare to him, a crosse and discontentment: So doth God many times, in just judgement, give his blessings to wicked men, to be snares, and curses, and crosses to them.

6 Mercies that come as returns of prayer, may be known by this, if they are given in the time when God doth draw out thine heart to seeke him in holy duties. An instance of this you have, *Act.* 12. While the Church was met to pray for *Peters* enlargement, the prison-doors were opened; and he came and knocked at the doore of the house, where they were assembled. This was an evident signe that God gave in *Peter* to them as a return of prayer. So, *Act* 4. 31. *When they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.* —— You read, *John* 4. 52, 53. That the Noble man enquired diligently concerning the time wherein the childe began to recover; and when he understood that, he knew it was a

return of his prayer, and a fruit of Christs love. God tels his people, *Isa.*65.24. *Before they call I will answer, and while they are yet speaking I will hear.* Thus we read in the Book of Martyrs, That the people of God did make it a sign of Gods answering their prayers, when God was pleased to give in his mercies to them at the time wherein they prayed. Thus we read of *Luther*, That there was a young man that had made a Covenant, and sealed a Bond with his own blood, to give himself, soul and body to the Devil; onely to live in pleasure, and to do and have whatsoever he did desire. And when the time of the Bond was almost out, he being much troubled in his minde, came to *Luther*, and told him what he had done, and what was like to befal him upon it. Whereupon *Luther* called the Church together, and kept a solemn Fast in the behalf of the young man: And whilest that *Luther* was in prayer, being earnest with God, there was a great noise heard amongst them; and the Bond was cast into the lap of *Luther*, in the midst of the Congregation. And so for time to come, the young man did lead a holy and godly life.

7 And lastly, Mercies are given as answers of prayers, in case you make care and conscience to perform to God those vowes which you made to God before you did enjoy the mercy. But when we promise God largly before we have the mercy, and when we have them, do not perform our vows, it is an argument we have the mercies by general and common Providence: *Job* 22.27,28. *Thou shalt make thy prayer unto him, and he shall hear thee; and thou shalt pay thy vowes: thou shalt also decree a thing, and it shall be established unto thee; and the light shall shine upon thy wayes.* When thou begg'st a mercy, and say'st, Lord, give me such a mercy, and I will do thus and thus; I will walk so and so before thee, I will improve them to thy glory. Now when thou shalt thus ask for mercy, and make vows to God, he will hear; but then thou must be sure to perform thy vows. This frame of heart we finde to be in *David*, *Psal.*66.13, 14. *I will go into thine house with burnt-offerings, I will pay thee my vowes which my lips have uttered, and my mouth hath spoken when I was in trouble.* You see *David* was in trouble, and he prayed to God, and made some promises and vowes, in case God

God would deliver him. Now God did deliver him out of trouble, and he did make good his vowes. Now here was a return of prayer. *David* you see did not grow secure and careless, but he made conscience to pay what he had promised to God. And so you see how you may discover, whether the mercies you receive from God be returns of prayer, or onely fruits of common and general Providence. And so much for answer to that Question.

Another Objection, or case of conscience is this; *How can this be true, that God gives his people more then they need, seeing it is the complaint of Gods people many times, that they have been a long time begging mercy, and God doth not give them so much as they desire. Many say, I pray for pardon of sin, and I cannot get it pardoned, and the pardon sealed. I pray daily for power against my corruptions, and yet I cannot get my lusts subdued? What then shall I think of my prayers, may some poor soul say?* Object. 1.

Now to this I shall lay down several things, by way of answer.

1 It must be considered, that God many times gets glory by the denials of his people; yea, he gets more glory by denying, then by the granting of a mercy. And if the denying of a mercy to thee, be the way to advance Gods glory, it is better that God should have his glory, and thou be without the mercy, then that thou shouldst have the mercy, and God want his glory. An eminent instance of this you have, *John* 11. There was a prayer made by *Mary* & *Martha* for their brother *Lazarus*; And they came unto Jesus, & said, *He whom thou lovest is sick:* But Jesus said, *This sicknes is not unto death, but for the glory of God.* When Jesus Christ heard that he was sick, yet he stayed two days in the place where he was; though he loved *Martha*, and he loved *Lazarus*, yet he stayed two days and would not go to him: but in the 14 Verse, Christ said plainly, *Lazarus is dead: And I am glad for your sakes, that I was not there, to the intent that you might believe.* But they said unto him, *Lord, if thou hadst been here, he had not died.* Christ came and commanded them to roll the stone away, *Martha* answered, *He hath been four dayes in the grave, and by this time he stinketh.* This was that that Christ aimed at: Christ knew that it was greater glory to him, to raise the Answ. 1.

the dead out of the grave, then to raiſe him out of the bed of ſickneſs: The power of his Godhead did more appear in the former then in the latter. And when *Martha* told him, *He ſtinketh*; Jeſus anſwered, *Said I not unto thee, If thou didſt believe, thou ſhouldſt ſee the glory of God?* that, is thou ſhouldſt ſee the power of my Godhead. This was the end of Chriſts denying of mercy, though it was earneſtly deſired.

2 I anſwer, It may be thou do'ſt not hear God in his commands, and then it is no wonder God doth not hear thee in thy prayers. If thou do'ſt not hearken to the call of God, it may be expected that God ſhould not hearken to thy call. See, *Prov.* 1. 24. *Becauſe I have called, and ye refuſed, I have ſtretched out my hand, and no man regarded.* Compared with *Verſe* 28. *Then ſhall they call upon me, but I will not anſwer; they ſhall ſeek me early, but they ſhall not finde me.* Mic. 3. 4. *Then ſhall they cry unto the Lord, but he will not hear them; he will even hide his face from them at that time, as they have behaved themſelves ill in their doings.* Zach. 7. 13. *Therefore it is come to paſs, that as he cried, and they would not hear; ſo they cried, and I would not hear, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts.* It may be God hath been calling upon thee theſe many yeers to believe and to repent; to be reformed, to forſake the evil of your doings; and thou haſt not heard his calling; his mercies have not drawn thee; his judgements have not affrighted thee: and is it not juſt with God to let thee call, and he not hear thee?

3 It may be thou doſt ask but ſleightly, & therefore thy prayers are not ſuccesful: As it is with a man, that asketh any thing of another man ſleightly and coldly, he doth, as it were, deſire him to ſay him nay: So when a man askes mercies of God careleſly and indifferently, this provokes God to give no anſwer. It may be thou prayeſt ſleepily and drouzily, and with a wandring heart: and doſt thou think God will hear that prayer, that thou doſt not hear thy ſelf? Doſt thou think that God will accept of that prayer, when thou knoweſt not what thou ſayeſt?

4 God may give thee a mercy, and thou through thy incredulity, impatiency, and inobſervancy, not minde the returns that God gives. God may hear thy prayers, and yet thou not take any notice of it. This you may ſee in *Job*, *Job* 9. 16, 17. *If I have called and God anſwered, yet I will not believe that God hath heard me,*

me, becauſe thou breakeſt me with thy tempeſt.——*Job* was in a fit of impatiencie and unbelief. And though God did give him returns of prayer, yet he would not, did not obſerve them.

5 God may deny thee the mercy, not that he is unable, or unwilling to hear thee or relieve thee; but to make thee the more deſirous of, and ſo the more fit for mercy. It may be yet thou art not fit for an anſwer. The Philoſopher begged ſome money of *Antigonus*, he gave him a *Drachme*: He ſaid, It is not for a King to give ſo little, a Talent had been a more ſuitable gift. The King replied, Though a Talent is fit for me to give, yet thou art not fit to receive: So though God is alwayes fit and ready to give an anſwer to our prayers, yet we are not alwayes fit and ready to receive it. God bids us open our mouthes wide, and I will fill it. God denies us, that we may open our mouthes the wider, and enlarge our deſires the more after mercy. The Lord doth by his people, as a father by his childe; a father may ſeem to withdraw and hide himſelf from his childe, to try its love to him; and the childe begins to mourn and cry, yet the father comes not to the childe; but when he heares the childe cry aloud, then he comes to it, and takes it up in his arms: So the Lord many times ſees his people pray, but he ſeems to withdraw from them, to hide himſelf from the prayers of his people; and goes as it were out of their ſight, until they begin to cry aloud, to be very earneſt and importunate in their prayers, till their deſires be enlarged towards God; and then graciouſly returns their prayers into their boſom. Now this is a very good reaſon, why God denies the prayers of his people. Deſires deferr'd, grow the ſtronger; but if the mercies be ſoon given, the deſires grow cold, and the mercy grows contemptible. Mannah lightly come, is lightly ſet by. God doth by us as a Fiſher-man doth, he draws back the bait, that ſo the Fiſh may come after it the more eagerly, and bite the harder. God ſeems to draw back a mercy, that we may more earneſtly purſue it.

Deſideria dilata creſcunt, at citò data vileſcunt.

6 Conſider this that Gods people have prayed and waited a long time, before God hath given them the mercy they have asked, before God hath given them an anſwer of their prayers. God promiſed *Abraham* a ſon, that from him ſhould proceed ſuch an one, in whom all the families of the earth ſhould be bleſſed, that his

his seed should be multiplied as the stars in the firmament; and yet it was fifteen years between the time of Gods making him that promise, and the accomplishment of it. So likewise you finde it in *Zachariah* and *Elizabeth*, they prayed for a Childe at the first beginning of their marriage, now God did hear their cries and prayers; yet he did not give them a return till they were old and stricken in yeares. So likewise it was with the Church, *Lament.* 3. *verse.* 8. *Also when I cry and shout, he shutteth out my prayer.* And *verse* 44. *Thou hast covered thy selfe with a cloud, that our prayers should not passe through.* So also it was, *Hab.* 1.2. *O Lord, how long shall I cry, and thou wilt not heare?* It was also the complaint of holy *David*, *Psal* 22. 1,2. *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? O my God, I cry in the day time and thou hearest not, and in the night season, and am not silent.*

7. God may not onely deferre or deny to heare his peoples prayers, but in some times and cases be angry with the prayers of his people. *Psal.* 80 4. *O Lord God of hosts, how long wilt thou be angry against the prayers of thy people?* So, *Job* 30. 20, 21. *I cry unto thee, and thou dost not heare me: I stand up, and thou regardest me not; thou art become cruel to me with thy strong hand, thou opposest thy selfe against me.*

8. Consider this for thy comfort, that thy person may be accepted and thy prayers heard, and yet the thing thou prayest for not granted to thee. An instance of this you have in Christ himselfe, he prayed, *Father, if it be possible let this cup passe from me*, Mat. 26. yet this cup did not passe from him, but he did drink of it, and yet it is said that Christ *was heard in all that he prayed for*, Heb. 5. 7. *Deut.* 3. *verse* 23. *I besought the Lord at that time* (saith *Moses*) and *ver.* 26. *But the Lord was wroth with me for your sakes, and would not heare me: and the Lord said unto me, Let it suffice thee, speake no more to me of this matter.* *Moses* did importunately desire that he might see the Land, and go over *Jordan* to possesse it. *Moses* was a godly man, and here he prayes for this mercy, but yet God was angry with him, and bade him pray no more. God bade him go up into the Mount and see the Land, but told him he should not go over. So when thou askest a particular mercy at the hand of God, God may deny them

that

that mercy, and yet heare their prayers and accept their persons.

9 God may deny thee thy mercy thou askest, and give thee a better in the room of it; he makes you to open your mouthes the wider, that he may give you the greater mercies. *Abraham* prayed that *Ishmael* might live. Now God did not heare his prayer in that, as *Abraham* did desire it, but he gave him *Isaac*, and with him he established the Covenant, which was a better mercy. *Moses* was denied in his request to go into *Canaan*, but he was translated into a better place, into the true *Canaan*, the Kingdom of Heaven.

10 God may deny what we pray for in mercy, which should he grant it would be a token of his wrath; as if a man should ask that which was sinful, or that which would be an unavoidable occasion of sin, or if he should ask it for sinful ends, or in case a man ask that that would be a monument of his shame; all which Cases I have spoken to before, and therefore shall now say no more.

11 God may hear another mans prayers for thee, though he will not hear thine own. This is a great comfort to every poor weak Christian in the World, they have a stock of prayers going for them to the throne of grace. You read in *Job* 42. that God forbade his three friends to pray, but bade *Job* pray for them, and told him, that he would hear him for them, *Vers.* 8, 9. *—Go to my servant* Job, *and offer up for your selves a burnt-offering, and my servant* Job *shall pray for you; for him will I accept, lest I deal with you after your folly, in that you have not spoken of me the thing that is right, like my servant Job.* And they did as God commanded them, and the Lord accepted *Job*. It may be there be times when you cannot pray, or when God will not hear your prayers, but remember you have a stock of prayers going for you. And thus much shall suffice by way of Answer to this Objection; I now come to make Application.

The eighth Sermon.

LUKE 11. 8.

I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity, he will give him as many as he needeth.

Corolary 1. IN the first place, let me draw some Inferences or Corollaries from what hath been insisted upon.

1 Returns to prayer are not given for the works sake, but for the persons sake. Though the matter of thy prayer may be good, yet if thou art not a good man thou shalt not be accepted. God had respect first to *Abel*, and then to his offering. *Psal.* 34.17. *The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth.*—— The person must be in a state of favour, before the duty can be accepted.

Corol. 2. 2. Though prayers are not returned for the work, yet they are not returned without the work. God expects the work, and the work you must do, though God will not have you to look for acceptance for the works sake.

Corol. 3. 3 Nor are returns of prayer made to a person singly considered, but to a member of Christ, as one that hath a share in his Intercession, *Joh.* 15. 7. *If ye abide in me,——ye shall aske what you will, and it shall be given you.* So, *Joh.* 16.23. *Whatsoever ye ask the Father in my Name, that he will give to you.* All our prayers are but Cyphers, till Christs intercession be added. Cyphers in Arithmetick stand for nothing till a figure be added.

Corol 4. 4. The longer and the more thou hast prayed, the more affectionate shouldest thou be in prayer, *Matthew* 6. 7. *Ask, and ye shall have; seek, and ye shall finde; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.* Observe the gradation in these words; Ask, but you must not stay there, you must seek; nor yet must you rest satisfied there, you must knock. Your affections should

should be every day more eager and earnest, you should pray more fervently; as it is said of Christ, *Luke* 22.44.

Luke 22.44. ἐκτενέστερον προσηύχετο. *Corol.* 5.

5 He can never pray importunately, that doth not pray daily; intermission of duty will quickly cause an interruption in thine affections; you must therefore pray in secret, pray fervently, pray morning and evening. And to stir you up to and encourage you in this work,

Consider, 1 The example of those holy men of God, who have done thus. *Nehemiah* 1.6. *Let thine eare now be attentive, and thine eye open, that thou mayest hear the prayer of thy servant which I pray before thee day and night.* So you have the example of *Daniel*, Dan.6.10.—— *He kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.* It was a custome that he had observed of former time. Though he was a great Courtier, and a man full of great employment, yet he would not neglect prayer. Nor was this an extraordinary fit, but his ordinary course. So in *David*, Psal.5. 3. *My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, and in the evening will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up.* So, *Psal* 88.13. *But unto thee have I cried, ô Lord, and in the morning shall my prayer prevent thee.* So *Psal.*119.147. *I prevented the dawning of the morning, and cried unto the Lord.* Psal.55.17. *Evening and morning and at noon will I pray and cry aloud.*

2 You have the example of Jesus Christ, *Mark* 1.35. In the morning rising up a great while before day, he went out and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed; and so at evening, *Matth.*14.23. *He went up into a mountain to pray, and when the evening was come he was there alone.* And lest you should think this was onely upon extraordinary occasion, it is said, *Luke* 22. 3. *He came to the Mount of Olives, as he was wont.* John 18.2. *Jesus resorted thither with his Disciples.*

3 Consider, you have the very examples of Heathens in this. The Heathens sacrificed to *Hercules* morning and evening upon the great Altar at *Rome*.

4 Consider, that in the Lords Prayer we are taught to pray every day. Christ did not bid us pray for bread or things necessary for a moneth or a year, but day by day.

5 This was prefigured in the Law, there was a daily offering

to be given to God, a Lambe at morning, and a Lambe at night, as you may see, *Exod.* 29 38, 39. Yea, extraordinary sacrifices did not abolish this number; there was a burnt-offering for the Sabbath, besides the continual burnt-offering, and the burnt-offering at the beginning of the moneh, and the Passeover and yet though these extraordinary works were to be done, yet the ordinary were not to be left undone. So that you see here is good ground and encouragement for men to be frequent in these religious duties.

And so much for the first Use.

Use 2. Caution. 2 This may be useful for the instruction of those to whom God hath given returns of prayers, to whom God hath out of his bounty given more then they did ask. To such I must give, First, some negative cautions. Secondly, some positive cautions.

Negative 1. 1 Some negative cautions, and that in four regards.

1 Let not Gods returns to thy prayers make thee remiss and careless in the performance of duty. Beware of an empty heart when God brings in thy mercies with a full hand. Merchant-Adventurers, if they have good returns, are incouraged to adventure their Ships to sea again: Our hearts are so base and disingenuous, that we are apt, when we have what we seek for, to seek no more. O take heed of this, let not Gods goodnesse make you worse.

2 Another caution is this. Let not returns to prayer make you conceited and proud of your gifts, or of your graces. We are too apt to reflect upon our selves, our parts, our graces, our abilities, and therefore we have more need to take heed of it. Beware that thine heart be not lifted up in pride against God, lest God be provoked to lift up his hand against thee in judgement.

3 Take heed that you do not ascribe the returns of Prayer to your own importunity, but meerly to the freenesse of Gods grace. Men are very apt to sacrifice to their own nets, and burn incense to their own drags. Take heed of this, God cannot endure to have his glory given to another. Say rather, I have received a mercie, but (alas) there is nothing in me that could deserve it, all comes solely from the free grace of God.

4 Take

4 Take heed of returning again to sin, after God hath returned thy prayers into thy bosome, *Psal.*85.8. *I will hear what the Lord God will speak, for he will speak peace to his people, but let them not turn again to folly.* It would be both sin and folly in thee to return to sin after God hath given thee an answer of peace. This was *Davids* resolution for his own particular, *Psal.* 6. 8. *Depart from me all ye workers of iniquity:* Why, what's the reason? *The Lord hath heard the voice of my supplication.* As if *David* had said, O ye wicked men, you have been occasions of sin to me, and companions in sin with me, but now that God hath been thus gracious to me, now that God hath graciously returned my prayers, I will have no more to do with you; *Depart from me ye workers of iniquity.* And so much for the negative Cautions.

I shall now lay down a few positive Cautions.

Caution positive.

1 If God hath returned thy prayers, see that thou beest more frequent in prayer then thou wast formerly. This was the purpose of holy *David*, Psal.116. *Because the Lord hath heard my prayer, therefore I will call upon him as long as I live.* So let it be your care, to set your selves more solemnly, and seriously to seek God then ever you have done.

2 See that you be more in praises to God then you have been. Those mercies that thou hast won by prayer, are to be worn by thankfulness, *Psal.*145.10. *All thy works praise thee, O Lord, and thy Saints do bless thee.* All Gods works do praise him; *The Heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy work.* That is, they are all the passive monuments of Gods power in creating them: But the Saints they are agents in praising God. Blessing is more then praising: A picture praiseth him that made it; but it doth not bless him; The Saints, they bless God in a peculiar manner; their mouthes are full of the praises of God: They have a principle within them of praising God; they are agents in setting forth his praise. And therefore it is very fit that you should bless God.

3 See that you be much in obedience: If God doth much for thee, see that thou do much for God. If God hath an hearing ear, thou must have a doing hand. And so much for the Use of Caution.

Use 3. Comfort.

3 I shall speak something by way of comfort.

1 To such as have not this importunity, nor this return of prayers.

2 To such as have returns to prayer.

1 Here is a word of consolation to those that want this holy importunity; and that in three respects:

1 Thou mayest pray with sincerity, when thou do'st not pray with importunity. *The Lord*, saith *David*, *is nigh to all that call upon him*; but how? Not onely to them that call on him importunately and powerfully, but *to all that call upon him in truth*; if thou canst say thou dost call upon God in truth, and with a sincere heart, God will be nigh unto thee.

2 It is the office of Christ to pray for thee in Heaven, when thou dost not pray upon earth. It is the work of Jesus Christ to make intercession for thee to his Father. Although thou hast not importunity in thy self, yet consider, ô believing soul, that Christ is in Heaven, importuning the Father for thee.

3 A sense and complaining of the want of this holy importunity, is accounted by God a degree of it. If you did never complain of the want of the Spirit, it was a sign you never had the Spirit: and now that you bewail the want of it, it is a signe you have it.

2 Branch.

2 Here is also a word of consolation, to those that have returns of prayer; and that in four respects:

1 Thy mercies are double mercies: It is a mercy to have mercy, but to have it in such a way, is a double mercy, *Psal. 91. They shall call upon me, and I will answer them; and I will be with him in trouble, &c.* It is a mercy to have deliverance out of trouble; but to have it through prayer, a deliverance that comes in by prayer is a double mercy.

2 These mercies are sanctified mercies. Mercies as you are creatures are good, but as returns of prayer they are sanctified: And blest mercies are much better to the soul that enjoyeth them.

3 The mercies which thou hast, as returns of prayer, are costly mercies. Mercies that come in by providence, are easie and cheap, but mercies that come in by prayer are costly; they cost the price of Christs blood to purchase them; and they cost

coſt thee many a prayer and tear to obtein them.

4 Theſe Mercies are ſealing Mercies, and that in three particulars,

1 They are ſeals to you, that you have the Spirit of God; for Chriſt hears no prayers, and no ſpirit, but his own. God is as well pleaſed with the barking of a Dog, as with the prayers of a Chriſtleſs man.

2 It is a ſeal to thee of an intereſt in Chriſts interceſſion. If thy prayers are returned, it is a ſigne they are accepted. Now no prayers are accepted, but by vertue of the interceſſion of Jeſus Chriſt.

3 Theſe returns are a ſeal of more mercies; a ſign that thou ſhalt have more mercies from God. One mercy that is given in by prayer, is a pledge of another mercy; and thy mercy in this life, is a pledge to thee, that thou ſhalt have eternal happineſs in Heaven to all eternity.

The

The first Sermon.

1 THESSALONIANS 5.9.

For God hath not appointed us unto wrath, but to obtein Salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.

THis Text conteins in it the immutable decree and unchangeable counsel of God, touching Mankinde; though all men are made by the same hand, yet they are not all appointed to attein the same end, by that God that made them; some are made to be vessels of honour, and others to be vessels of wrath: some are appointed to be vessels of honour, meet for the Lord Jesus Christs use, *and others to be vessels of wrath, fitted for destruction, Rom* 9.22,23. Some, as in my Text, are appointed unto wrath, and others to obtein salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ; so that all Mankinde are comprehended under these two ranks, there are but Sheep and Goats; right hand-men, and men of the left-hand; there are but some men elected, and others reprobated; some appointed unto wrath, and others to obtein salvation.

And

And if there be but theſe two wayes for all fleſh, then it behoves us to conſider what the counſels of God concerning us may be, whether we are appointed unto wrath, or to obtein ſalvation?

I ſhall keep you no longer in the preamble of the Text, ſome are appointed unto wrath. Wrath here is an emphatical word, and comprehends in it all the torments of the damned; and if you ask me why the torments of the damned are here called wrath, the reaſon is, becauſe it is the wrath of God that makes hell to be hell; Hell, if the favour of God could be there, would not be hell; and heaven, could Gods wrath be there, would not be heaven: The loſs of Gods favour is the greateſt puniſhment that a man can undergo; the torments of hell are called wrath, to intimate to us, that the greateſt torture the creature can undergo, is the lying under the wrath of God; the want of the favour of God ſhall be the compleat torture of the damned; all the torments of the wicked are called by this general expreſſion, the wrath to come. 1 Theſſ. 1. 10.

Beloved, the words are not difficult, I ſhall diſcourſe and handle them under a double conſideration. Firſt, under a relative; and ſecondly, under an abſolute conſideration.

Firſt, under a relative conſideration; For God hath not appointed us unto wrath; for this word (for) carries a reference to ſome thing that goes before in the preceding Verſe; but let us who are of the day be ſober, putting on the breſt-plate of Faith and Love, and for an helmet the hope of Salvation; *for God hath not appointed us unto wrath, but to obtein ſalvation:* As if the Apoſtle ſhould ſay, You are not to argue on this manner, that if God hath decreed me to be ſaved I may live as I liſt, I ſhall be ſaved for all that; or if God hath decreed me to be damned, I ſhall be damned do what I can to the contrary, becauſe I cannot alter Gods decree. You muſt not argue thus, ſaith he, *but let us who are of the day be ſober, putting on the breaſt-plate of Faith and Love, &c. for we are not appointed unto wrath.* Gods decrees ſhould not be an encouragement to you to live as you liſt, but a ſpur to provoke you to live in the daily exerciſe of Grace; from whence I would note this Doctrine.

That the Doctrine of Gods election and reprobation, or ap- *Doct.*

pointing ſome men to glory in Heaven, and others to be veſſels of wrath in hell, is or ought to be a ſpecial inducement and ſpur to provoke men to live in the exerciſe of Grace.

This is that which is here laid down by the Apoſtle, and the uſe that I ſhall make of it, ſhall be to condemn thoſe indirect inferences that carnal hearts draw from this Doctrine of Predeſtination; then the *Pelagians*, they argue from the Decrees of God: ſay they, if God have decreed ſome to be ſaved, and others to be damned, we may then live as we liſt; for let us do what we can, we cannot poſſibly alter Gods Decrees. And again, others they reaſon thus, If God hath decreed ſome to Heaven, and others to Hell, & the Decrees of God are unalterable, why, then let no man faſt or pray, or perform any holy duties; for if he ſhall be ſaved he ſhall be ſaved, or if he ſhall be damned he ſhall be damned. *Fauſtus Rhegienſis* one of the *Semipelagian* Sect ſaid, *Nemo vigilet, nemo jejunet, libidini contradicat, &c.* Thus they ſuck poiſon out of this ſweet Doctrine of Gods Decrees, whereas theſe ſhould be a motive and incentive to duty; for in the ſame Decree, wherein God intends the final eſtate of any man, he does as well intend the means towards that end, as the end it ſelf; if God intends to ſave ſuch a man, in the ſame Decree he likewiſe intends that that man ſhall have Grace, and uſe thoſe means, and perform thoſe duties that are required in a perſon that ſhall be ſaved. The Elect of God are *predeſtinated by God to be conformed to the Image of his Son*, Rom. 8. 29. *God had before ordained that we ſhould walk in good works*, Epheſ. 2. 10.

And as God hath decreed ſuch a number of men ſhall be damned, ſo he hath likewiſe decreed to ſuffer thoſe men to walk on after the vain imaginations of their own hearts, and to do that which is right in their own eyes, that ſo their deſerved end may be deſtruction.

It is a piece of folly from the appointment of the end, to infer the refuſal or neglect of the means.

I know there is not any of you but would count this a very abſurd and irrational conſequence, ſhould a man argue thus: God hath in his decree unalterably ſet down how long I ſhall live; my days are numbred, ſo long I ſhall live and no longer, and therefore I will uſe no means to prolong my life, or recover my health;

health; I will neither eat nor drink, nor use Physick &c. This were a confessed absurdity and madnes; for as God hath decreed how long you shall live, so he hath likewise decreed that you shall use the means that he hath appointed to prolong your life.

As it was in the great tempestuous storm that *Paul* and the rest of the men in the Ship were in sailing to *Rome*, *Acts* 27.24. *The Angel of God told* Paul *that there should be no loss of any mans life, but of the Ship only*; yet in the 31 Verse *Paul* tells them, *That unless they did all abide in the Ship, they could not be saved.* God decrees the means to be used, as well as the end. So, *Hezekiah* in 2 *Kings* 20.6. when upon his prayer the Lord added fifteen years unto his days; now mark, had it been reasonable in him to conclude thus? The Lord hath promised that I shall live so many years longer, and therefore I will neither eat nor drink, nor sleep, and the like, to prolong my life; no certainly, for as God did decree he should live fifteen yeers longer, so he did decree he should use the means to recover his health and prolong his life, in the 7th. Verse.

But I shall stand no longer upon this particular, but come now to handle the words in an absolute consideration, *we are not appointed unto wrath, but to obtein salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.* In these words there is something implied, We are not appointed unto wrath, which implyes that there are a certain number of people appointed by God unto wrath; and here is something expressed, namely, that there are a certain number of people that are not appointed to wrath, but to obtein salvation; And thirdly, here is exprest, that Jesus Christ is the means appointed by God the Father, in and through whom men should obtein salvation.

These are the three particular heads I shall insist upon; I shall begin this morning with what is implyed, and come in the afternoon to that which is exprest. First, from what is here implyed, observe this Doctrine,

That there are a certain number of men appointed by God to be objects of his eternal Wrath. Beloved, this is a dreadful point that I am now to handle, and therefore I shall spend but one hour upon it. I know there are a generation of men that utterly deny any such purpose in God, that any of his creatures should *Doct.*

be caſt away, ſay they, it were cruelty in God to decree any of his people to be objects of his wrath: but I ſhall clearly evince it.

I will firſt prove this Doctrine, that it is ſo, which appears by thoſe many expreſſions to this purpoſe, as that in, *Romans* 9.22. ſayes the Apoſtle there, *Hath not the Potter power over the clay of the ſame lump, to make one veſſel to honour, and another to diſhonour? therefore what if God willing to ſhew his wrath, and make his power known, endured with much long-ſuffering, the veſſels of wrath fitted to deſtruction*; that is, who can ſay any thing to God, or dare charge him with cruelty or injuſtice, if he does do ſo? and ſo in the Epiſtle, of *Jude* v.4 there is mention made of ſome, *ungodly men, that were before of old ordained to this condemnation*: ſo in *Ro.* 11.5. the Apoſtle ſaith, *there are but a remnant according to the election of grace, and the reſt are hardened*: there are but ſome to obtein ſalvation, and others to be objects of Gods eternall wrath.

But the better to clear this truth to you, I ſhall ſpend ſome time in handling theſe two queſtions, as firſt,

Queſt. *Queſt.* How can it ſtand with Gods mercy that he ſhould, in his eternal Counſels, appoint any of his creatures to be objects of his wrath, when it is ſaid, that he beheld all the works of his hands, and behold, they were all very good: now how can it conſiſt with the mercy of God to damn thoſe creatures that he hath made, nay, to appoint them to be objects of his wrath before he made them?

Queſt. 2. *Queſt.* 2. What black brands or Characters, the Scripture ſaies down of ſuch perſons who are to be objects of Gods wrath to all eternity?

Several Concluſions abont the Doctrine of Gods Decrees premiſed.

But before I can proceed in handling theſe Queſtions, I muſt by the way premiſe theſe three or four Concluſions: as firſt,

1. That Gods decree, or appointing ſome men to be objects of his wrath, his decree (I ſay) does not infuſe any ſin or evil into ſuch perſons, but onely withold his grace from them. Look into *Deut.*29.4. it is ſaid, *The Lord hath not given thee eyes to ſee, and ears to hear.* God did not put out their eyes, or take away their eares. So, *Pſal.*81.12. *So I gave them up unto their own hearts luſt.* God did not put luſt into them, but he withheld his grace from them, which would have ſubdued their luſt.

2. The

2. The decree of non-election is to be distinguished from the decree of destination to punishment: this latter is usually called by Divines predamnation. The first is an act of Gods sovereignty, the latter an act of his justice: the one considers man as a reasonable creature, and mutable, the other as fallen into sin.

3 That the most of mankinde are appointed by God to be objects of his wrath: this is a very sad truth. *Many are called, but few are chosen, Mat.*22.14. *There are but a remnant according to the election of grace, Rom.*9.5,6,7. It is the observation of one, that if the world were divided into 31 parts, of those there are but five parts that ever heard of Christ; and of those how few are there that in their lives do declare any benefit by Christ: the most of men lie under this fatal misery appointed by God to everlasting damnation. The Church is but a little flock, a Garden, which is but a little spot of ground in comparison of the fields of the earth. *Brerewoods Enquiries.*

4. Another Conclusion is this, That the ordeining of most men unto wrath does no way impeach the mercy of God. Because God would shew more mercy, should he save but one man in the world, then he would shew severity of Justice, should he condemn all the rest: and this brings me to the first question I promised to handle, which is this.

Quest. How can this be consistent with the mercy of God, to appoint any of his creatures unto wrath? *Quest.*

I answer, It may very well stand with Gods mercy, to appoint his Creatures to wrath. *Answ.*

1 God hath an absolute soveraignty over all his Creatures, to do with them as he pleaseth: may not I do with mine own what I list? and who can say unto me What do'st thou? *Rom* 9. 21. *Such a power as the Potter hath of the same lump of clay, to make one vessel to honour, and another to dishonour*, such a power hath God over all the Sons and Daughters of men; he hath an absolute sovereignty over all his creatures, to do with them what seems good in his own eyes, and who art thou ô man that replyest against God?

2 Take this for an answer, that there is a great deal of reason why God should destroy and damn all the creatures that he hath

hath made; as firſt, becauſe God when he made man at firſt, he made him holy and upright, and perfect, and able to do his will in all things. He was able both to do the will of God, and alſo to continue in that eſtate wherein God made him, and ſo to be everlaſtingly happy. It is true, had God infuſed any vicious qualities into man, it were ſomething; but Gods hand was free from any ſuch thing. God at firſt made man upright, but he hath ſince ſought out many inventions, *Eccleſ.*7.29. *Adam* was in a ſtate of perfection, but onely under a poſſibility of falling if he would; and God fore-ſeeing that man would fall, there was great reaſon why every man ſhould be damned, becauſe every man did fall. So the Angels they were at firſt made perfect, yet mutable, and becauſe they fell, the Lord condemned every one of them, and ſaved none; but he doth not deal ſo with us, he ſpared none of the fallen Angels, but yet he doth ſave ſome of us, and therefore he hath ſhewed greater mercy to you the ſinful ſons and daughters of *Adam*, then he did to the fallen Angels; becauſe all the Angels that fell were damned, but man fell too, and yet the Lord reſcues a remnant, that are not appointed to wrath, but to obtein ſalvation through Jeſus Chriſt.

3 Take this for an anſwer, that the Lord ſhews more mercy, in the ſaving and appointing of one man to life and ſalvation, then he would have done rigour of juſtice, if he had condemned all the men in the World. I ſhall make it appear to you thus, becauſe God was not bound to ſave any, and therefore if he doth, it is an act of grace and mercy. Give me leave to illuſtrate it to you by this compariſon: Suppoſe a company of malefactors were all condemned to die. Now if a Prince ſhould come in amongſt them, and chuſe out one of them, he would ſhew more mercy in ſaving that one, then he would have done rigour if he had hanged them all, becauſe every one of them had deſerved it.

Thus it is with us; we have all tranſgreſſed and violated Gods law, and thereby lie under the guilt of condemnation, and being all condemned perſons, it is more mercy in God to ſave but one of us, then it would be rigour, if he ſhould have ſaved none. And thus much ſhall ſerve in anſwer to the firſt queſtion.

The

Queſt. 2.

The next thing I ſhall ſpeak to, is to ſhew you what are thoſe black brands that the Scripture layes down of ſuch perſons that are appointed by God to be objects of his eternal wrath?

The black brands of a Reprobate diſcovered.

(Beloved) we can judge no man for the preſent; we may ſay that a man that goes on in ſuch a ſinful practice is not called, but we cannot ſay he is not elected: but if he continues, living and dying in ſuch a courſe of ſin, this plainly ſhews ſuch a man to be an object of wrath.

The ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt deſcribed.

1 That man that hath committed the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, is unqueſtionably appointed by God to damnation. This is unqueſtionable, becauſe he ſhall neither be forgiven in this life, nor in the life to come, *Matthew* 12.32. There are a great many ingredients goes to the making up of this ſin, the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt; as, 1 A man muſt be a Profeſſor of Religion. 2 He muſt have knowledge to his profeſſion. 3 He muſt have ſome ſeeming holineſs. 4 He muſt fall away from all this. And 5 Perſecute it. And 6 He muſt do all this with malice, and againſt his conſcience. All theſe are ingredients to the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt. And a man that hath gone thus far, the Lord hath no intention to ſave him.

Now the other Characters I ſhall give you, are not ſo peremptory and undeniable as this; but yet they are probable ſymptomes or gueſſes the Word of God layes down, of ſuch men as are appointed to wrath.

Mark 2 of Reprobation.

2 A perſon that you may give a ſhrewd gueſs of to be appointed unto wrath, is ſuch a one as doth continue all his lifetime to ſpurn againſt and contemne the Miniſtery of Gods Word, *Acts* 13 48. *As many as were ordained unto eternal life, believed*; but others that were not, they rejected it, and put far from them the Word of God: thus *Amaziah* did in the 2 *Chron.* 25.16. when the Prophet reproved him for ſeeking after the gods of the Heathens for help, that could not deliver themſelves: the King anſwered him & ſaid, *Art thou made of the Kings counſel, forbear, why ſhouldeſt thou be ſmitten: then the Prophet forbore and ſaid, I know that God hath determined to deſtroy thee, becauſe thou haſt done this, and haſt not hearkened unto my counſel.* A man may cõjecture that God hath determin'd to deſtroy ſuch a man, that

that lies under the Miniſtery of the Word, oppoſing and contemning of it all his life-time.

Mark 3. 3 That man that is given over by God to a judicial hardneſs of heart, and to final impenitency: you may fear ſuch a man to be appointed unto wrath, *Rom.*2.5. But after thy hardneſs and impenitent heart, treaſureſt up unto thy ſelf wrath againſt the day of wrath, and the revelation of the righteous judgements of God. So in. *Rom.*11.7. *The Apoſtle ſpeaks there of a remnant according to the election of Grace, but the reſt were hardened*; when God ſhall give a man over to judicial hardneſs of heart, when he ſhall in juſt judgment harden his heart, and give him over to final impenitency, it is a ſign ſuch a man is appointed unto wrath.

Mark 4. 4 In caſe God hath all your life-time withdrawn the efficacy of his ſpirit from his Ordinances which you have enjoyed, when you ſhall perceive the ſame man that ſits in the Pew with you in Gods houſe, to grow better and better by every Ordinance, and you grow worſe and worſe, he is made more holy, and you more prophane; his heart more humble, and yours more proud; his heart more ſoft and tender, and ſenſible of the leaſt ſin, and yours more hard and inflexible; his conſcience more awakened and apprehenſive of the danger of ſin, and yours more ſtupified and benummed; he findes the Word of God as marrow and fatneſs to him, the joy and rejoyeing of his heart, but you finde no ſweetneſs or reliſh in it at all.

You that have theſe ſad ſymptoms upon you, are in a very ſad condition; and therefore conſider of it ſeriouſly, what will become of you another day: if thou goeſt on in this condition of barrenneſs and unfruitfulneſs under the means of grace, and God withdraws the efficacy of his Spirit from his Ordinances thou liveſt under, this is a ſhrewd ſign that thou art a man appointed unto wrath.

When God ſhall, as in *Iſa.*6.9,10. bid you *hear indeed, but underſtand not, and ſee indeed, but perceive not, and make your heart fat, and your eares heavy, and ſhut your eyes, leſt you ſee with your eyes, and hear with your ears, and underſtand with your hearts, & convert and be healed*; this is a ſad ſymptome of your reprobation.

5 When a man makes the grace and mercy of God to be a means

means to embolden him in wayes of sin and rebellion against God, when a man makes mercy a spur to impiety, and because God is so good, therefore he will be the more ventrous to run on in sin, this is a sad sign of reprobation.

Shall we sin (says the Apostle) *because grace doth abound? God forbid*; he speaks of it with detestation and abhorrency, when men shall presume on the mercy of God, and because he is so good and gracious, therefore they will be the more wicked and sinful, this is a sad thing. In the Epistle of *Jude, V.* 4. The Apostle there speaks of some ungodly men *that turn the grace of God into lasciviousness*; why, who are these? says he, *they are such as were of old ordained unto condemnation*; the Apostle lays it down as a sign of men appointed unto wrath, that do turn the grace of God into wantonness, and sin because grace doth abound.

Last symptome of Reprobation.

6 Such as fall away finally from the profession of Christianity, they are the persons that are appointed by God to destruction, such as fall finally from the profession of the Gospel. *Heb.* 10.38,39. *If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him: but we are not of them that draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul*; *If any man draw back unto perdition, my soul shall have no pleasure in him, but he shall be an object of my eternal wrath*: final apostasie is a brand that does characterize a man to be one appointed by God to be an object of his wrath.

Now therefore examine your selves, if any of you be written in this black bill, and live and die under any of these sad symptomes, you have cause to fear that you are men appointed unto wrath, and cannot possibly obtein salvation through Jesus Christ.

And thus I have done with the doctrinal part of this point, I might now in the Application fall upon those matters of dispute that are between the Papists and our Divines, and between the the *Arminians* and Orthodox, touching this doctrine, but these Disputes are fitter for the Schools then for the Pulpit, and better for a learned then a popular Auditory, and therefore I shall onely make a plain and practical use of it, and so have done.

Use 1. Is it so, then that there are a certain number of men ap-

Use 1.

appointed by God to be objects of his eternal wrath, Oh then! what cause have you and I to bless God, and bless Jesus Christ *that hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation; that we are freed from wrath to come by Jesus Christ*, as in 1*Thess.* 1. *v.* last? Oh bless and praise the Name of thy God, that his thoughts towards thee from everlasting have been of mercy and grace, and pardon, and forgiveness, of peace and loving kindness; Oh bless God, and bless Jesus Christ, that hath appeased his Fathers wrath, which else like as a consuming fire, would have burnt up thy soul like stubble; and when thou couldst not have been able to stand before these everlasting burnings, that then Christ should come and be as it were a skreen between his Fathers wrath and thee: Oh bless Jesus Christ, that he should interpose himself, that through him thou mightest obtain salvation.

Use 2. The second Use; If God hath appointed a certain number of people unto wrath, why then this may be matter of information, that the people of God may know that they are not appointed unto wrath, but to salvation: this is clear in the Text, saves the Apostle, *We are not appointed unto wrath, but to obtain salvation*: this is a great comfort to you, that you may not onely have a conjectural faith, but a sure and certain faith, you have the witness of the Spirit and the earnest of the Spirit for it, you may have a full assurance that you are not appointed unto wrath.

By the revealed will of God you may know his secret will, that he has had thoughts of grace, and mercy, and pardon, and glory towards you from all eternity; for how could the Apostle say here else so confidently, *We are not appointed unto wrath, but to obtain salvation?* So in 2 *Cor.* 13.6,7. saies the Apostle there, *I trust that ye shall know that we are not reprobates, though we are so accounted and esteemed of by the men of the world*: though we are reprobates in your eyes, yet we trust we are not so in the sight of God; so that Gods people may certainly know within themselves that they are not reprobates, or which is equivalent to it, that they are elected, and shall certainly obtain salvation by Jesus Christ.

Use 3. The third Use; I infer from hence, that Christians ought not

not rashly to conclude against themselves that they are appointed to wrath, because they do not discern that they are in a state of grace; though it is true, a man cannot be effectually called, but he must have grace, yet he may be elected, and yet be without grace for the present: for the elect of God do all of them for a season continue in a state of unregeneracy; and therefore be as bad as you will be, or as bad as you can be, it's true, you may say for the present, I am not called, but thou canst not say, I am not elected.

Christians should not conclude, that because they do not sensibly feel themselves in a state of grace, that therefore they are not elected, but ordained unto wrath; tis true, that whomsoever God hath predestinated to eternall life, before that man dies, he will effectually call him, yet a man may remain a great while in the state of unregeneracy before he be called; and therefore take heed of these rash cōclusions against your selves: from your present sinfulnesse you can onely gather non-vocation, but you cannot conclude non-election, for election was before all worlds, but vocation is done here in time.

The fourth Use; If this be so, that God hath appointed some men to wrath, why then, what comfort may this be to all you that are of the elect of God and are not of that number appointed unto wrath, but to obtein salvation? It may be thy condition is sad and miserable here in this life, but this may bear up thy heart, thou art not appointed to everlasting misery; though it may be God hath appointed thee to a prison here, yet this may comfort thee, he hath not appointed thee to an everlasting prison; it may be here thou art exposed to trouble and sorrow and grief, yet this may cheer up thy heart, that God hath not appointed thee to be an object of his eternall wrath and fury in the life to come. *Use 4.*

The fifth Use; If there be a certain number of people appointed by God to be objects of his everlasting wrath, why then all you that are vessels of mercy, the elect of God that are not appointed to wrath, but to obtein salvation; Oh let the high praises of God be in your mouthes continually; and the more to provoke you hereunto, consider these four particulars. *Use 5.*

Sevrral Motives to provoke the elect to thankfulneſs.

1 That though the greateſt part of the men in the world are appointed unto wrath, yet that you ſhould be in the number of the feweſt of men that are ordained unto life, this ſhould provoke you to thankfulneſs, that when God doth paſs by the moſt of men to be veſſels of wrath, yet you ſhould be in the number of that little flock that ſhall be ſaved by Chriſt.

2 To provoke you the more to thankfulneſs, conſider that thoſe who were by God appointed unto wrath, they are naturally as good as ever thou wert, yea, had no worſe natures then thou and I have, they had bad natures and ſo had we, we were naturally no better then they; Now that God ſhould ordain thee to life, and another man to wrath, whoſe nature was as good as thine, O how ſhould this make thee to bleſs the Name of the Lord?

3 Motive to thankfulneſs.

3 Conſider, that many men that have bin better in their lives then thou haſt been, have yet been appointed by God to wrath, and thou to mercy; go among the Heathens, and there you ſhall finde a holy *Cato*, a chaſte *Socrates*, a meek *Seneca*, a juſt *Ariſtides*, theſe men burn in Hell, and yet thou an unholy, & unchaſte, and impatient, and unjuſt creature brought to Heaven. *Cato* was a man admired for his ſanctity, inſomuch as it was ſaid of him, that if any man would avoid ſin, he ſhould ſo walk, as if *Cato* lookt upon him, and yet this man appointed to wrath, and thou ſaved; and ſo a chaſte *Socrates* caſt into everlaſting burnings, when thou that art an unchaſte and an impure man art carried to Heaven; & ſo a juſt *Ariſtides*, of whom it is ſaid that the Sun in the firmament ſhould ſooner change his courſe then he do injuſtice, and yet he in Hell, and thou an unjuſt man, elected to life; and a meek *Seneca*, excluded from mercy, and thou a froward and paſſionate man, taken up into glory.

And ſo if you look into the Book of God, you ſhall read of *Demas* that prized Religion, and of ſome that almoſt became Chriſtians, and of *Felix* that trembled under an Ordinance, it may be more then ever thou haſt done; and of *Herod* that heard the Word gladly, and many others, and yet theſe men rejected and thou embraced; this ſhould cauſe much thankſgiving and praiſe to redound unto God, that he ſhould have ſuch thoughts of mercy towards thee, and paſs by others.

4 Con-

4 Conſider, that thoſe men that have been by God appointed unto wrath, and are now in Hell, ſuffering the vengeance of eternal fire, theſe men had as much ſtrength to help themſelves from their miſery as thou haſt; no more ſtrength to keep thee from Hell then they had that are now in Hell, thou art not able of thy ſelf to act any grace, or perform any duty, or reſiſt any corruption, or withſtand any temptation, or to do any thing towards the ſaving of thy ſoul, and yet notwithſtanding thou haſt no more worth, or ſtrength, or excellencie then other men have, and yet that God ſhould ordain thee to life, and them to condemnation.

Uſe of Lamentation.

6 But this Doctrine doth not onely afford us matter of thankſgiving and praiſes of God, but alſo matter of lamentation too; it ſhould provoke your pity to conſider that ſuch goodly creatures as men and women are, ſhould yet be objects of Gods wrath, and tormented by him to all eternity; it moves your pity ſometimes to ſee a proper man going to be executed, you are ready to ſay, What pity is it that ſuch a man as that ſhould be deſtroyed; but how ſhould this move your pity much more, to conſider that ſuch goodly creatures as men & women are ſhould yet be the objects of the wrath of God to all eternity? It is ſaid of *Xerxes*, that when he went up to the top of an hill, and there ſaw an Army of ten hundred thouſand men in the field, he fell a weeping, and being asked the reaſon, he anſwered, *he wept to think what would become of all that brave Army within an hundred years:* could you ſtand upon a high hill, and there behold all the world and people in it, you might well burſt forth into tears of lamentation to conſider, what will become of all theſe people, 100 years hence, the moſt of them will then be tormented and roaring in Hell, and there muſt continue in endleſſe miſeries to all eternity. And thus I have done with the firſt Doctrine from what is here implied.

The

The second Sermon.

1 THESSALONIANS 5.9.

For God hath not appointed us unto wrath, but to obtein Salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.

WE come now to handle what is expreſt in the Text, we are not appointed unto wrath, but to obtein ſalvation through Jeſus Chriſt; here are three things expreſt. 1 What a Chriſtian is not appointed to, is not appointed to wrath; and then, 2 What he is appointed to, namely, to obtein ſalvation. And 3 Here is laid down the means by whom a Chriſtian doth obtein ſalvation, and that is by Jeſus Chriſt. We are not appointed unto wrath, but to obtein ſalvation through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

I ſhall onely at preſent ſpeak to the two firſt particulars, what a Chriſtian is not appointed to, and what he is appointed to; we are not appointed unto wrath, but to obtein ſalvation. From whence we may learn this Obſervation,

Doctrine. That there are a certain number who are appointed by God, not to wrath, but to obtein ſalvation. It is needleſs to multiply places of Scripture for the proof of it, the Doctrine lying ſo clear in the words; in the proſecution of it I ſhall do theſe three things.

1 Shew you what this ſalvation is, that a certain number of people are appointed to.

2 I ſhall examine whether this Doctrine of Predeſtination, and of Gods appointing of a certain number of people to ſalvation, be a Doctrine that ſhould make men looſe and careleſs.

3 I ſhall ſhew you whether God in appointing ſome men unto ſalvation, hath reſpect to their foreſeen faith or good works. For the firſt,

1 What

1 What is meant here by ſalvation, that ſome men are appointed to?

Queſt.

I anſwer, there are two things included in this term ſalvation. You muſt know in general, that it is that happy and glorious eſtate which glorified perſons in Heaven do and ſhall enjoy, and it includes in it theſe two things: there is in this eſtate ſomething privative, and ſomething poſitive.

Anſ.

A deſcription what ſalvation is.

1 There is ſomething privative in it, you ſhall be freed from ſin, and from the cauſes of ſin, and from the puniſhments of ſin; but here you are not ſo, the beſt of Gods children are not here freed from ſin, but it is a ſpot upon the moſt beautiful face; but then you ſhall appear as in *Epheſ.* 5.27. *not having ſpot or wrinkle, or any ſuch thing*, but you ſhall be holy and without blemiſh.

2 You ſhall be freed from the cauſes of ſin likewiſe, which are two, either from within, a ſinful, corrupted and polluted nature, or from without, the temptations and ſuggeſtions of Satan: then you ſhall be freed from the cauſe of ſin within, a corrupted and polluted nature, which ſhall then be converted into a glorified and purified nature, a nature that ſhall not have the leaſt provocation or inclination in it to vanity. And 2 You ſhall be freed from the temptations of the Devil, he ſhall then be no more able to trouble and moleſt or intice thee to ſin.

3 You ſhall be freed from the puniſhment of ſin, whether outward, as troubles, afflictions, diſgraces, perſecutions and death; or inward, as horrour and terrour of conſcience, and the like: when you come to Heaven you ſhall be freed from all theſe; but till you come there, none of theſe can be had, you ſhall neither be freed from ſin, the cauſes nor puniſhments of it. In the 1 *Kings* 6.32. it is ſaid there, that in the entrance into the holy of holies, upon the doors were carved Palm-Trees; now a Palm-Tree is an Embleme of Conqueſt and Victory, and theſe were placed there to note, that ſo long as we live in this World we are Souldiers to fight; but we are not Conquerours till we enter into the holy of holies, till we come to Heaven. In the time of the Law, if any unclean thing fell into a veſſel of earth, the veſſel was unclean, till it was broken: So it is with us, there is uncleanneſs in our bodies, and we ſhall not be clean, till our earthly Tabernacles be laid in the duſt. But

But 2. In this ſalvation there is not onely ſomething privative, but alſo ſomething poſitive; as firſt, we ſhall know God clearly, and ſee him as he is; we do here onely know God what he is not, and ſee him what he is not, we know he is not unjuſt, nor unrighteous, unwiſe or unmerciful, and the like; but we do not know what is that wiſdome and holineſſe, and omniſciency, and omnipotency, &c. that are in God; but in Heaven we ſhall know him as he is, we ſhall know God fully, and love God perfectly and unfeignedly, and ſerve him unweariedly, and praiſe him continually, and enjoy him everlaſtingly, and uninterruptedly. *Deum ſine fine videbimus, ſine faſtidio amabimus, ſine defatigatione laudabimus*, ſaith *Bernard*: it is true, the people of God have an enjoyment of God here in this life; but it is far different from that which they ſhall have in heaven. 1 It differs *in modo*, in the manner of enjoying: here they enjoy God mediately, and in and by his Ordinances; but then we ſhall enjoy him immediately without Ordinances; here we ſee him but as in a Glaſſe darkly, but then we ſhall behold him face to face. 2 *In menſura*, in the meaſure; here we enjoy God but in a ſmall and weak meaſure; but there we ſhall enjoy him in a larger and full meaſure. 3 *In duratione*, in the continuance; here we enjoy him but for a time, now and then; but in Heaven we ſhall enjoy him at all times and for ever, without intermiſſion or interruption. 4 *In certitudine*, in the certainty; here we have the enjoyment of God but in hope and expectation; but there in fruition, being continually made happy with the beatifical viſion.

But thus much for the firſt thing, what this ſalvation is that God hath appointed us unto.

Queſt. 2. *Queſt.* 2. The next thing to be diſcuſs'd is this, whether or no does Gods appointing of ſome men to be objects of his wrath, and others to obtain ſalvation, does this decree of God give men any juſt plea or excuſe, to embolden them to go on in ſinning againſt God? or may a man thus argue, If God hath before all worlds appointed and decreed me to be a veſſel of wrath, and his decrees are immutable and unchangeable, why then let me do what I will, hear never ſo many Sermons, or perform never ſo good duties, yet it is impoſſible I ſhould be ſaved;

and

and on the other ſide, if God hath not appointed me to wrath, but to obtein ſalvation, why then I may live as I liſt, I need not hear, or read, or pray, or perform any holy duty, for I am ſure I ſhall be ſaved? Beloved, though the Doctrine of Gods irrevocable and unchangeable Decrees be very good in its ſelf, yet there is a great deal of ill uſe made of it by wicked men, who are very apt to entertain ſuch corrupt reaſonings as theſe are; but now let us a little enquire whether this Doctrine of Gods Decrees does afford any ſuch inferences or deductions as theſe: If I am appointed unto wrath, let me do what I can, it is impoſſible I ſhould be ſaved, and if I am ordained unto life, I may live as I liſt, I am ſure I ſhall never be damned?

Now here I ſhall ſhew you in four or five Particulars, that this Doctrine of Gods Decrees in appointing ſome men to be veſſels of wrath, and others to obtein ſalvation, does no way embolden men to ſuch Concluſions as theſe are; for firſt, there is a quite contrary uſe made of it by the Apoſtle here in this place, in the Verſe preceding my Text, ſayes he, *Let us who are of the day be ſober, putting on the breaſtplate of faith and love, and for a helmet, the hope of ſalvation*; Why? *for God hath not appointed us unto wrath, but to obtein ſalvation by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* And ſo the Apoſtle *Peter* makes the ſame uſe of it in 1 *Pet.* 1. 5, 10. *Give all diligence to make your calling and election ſure: add to your faith vertue, to vertue knowledge, to knowledge temperance, &c.* The aſſurance of your election ſhould be a motive to you, to add grace to grace, and not ſin to ſin; ſo that this is the firſt thing by way of anſwer: the Scripture makes another uſe of the aſſurance of our election, namely, to be a motive to ſtir us up to add grace to grace, and holineſs to holineſs. 2 Know this by way of anſwer, that God in his eternal Decrees appointing ſome men to obtein ſalvation, does in the ſame Decree appoint the means by them to be uſed in order to their ſalvation, as well as their ſalvation it ſelf. Indeed, had God ſaid, I have determin'd to make ſuch & ſuch objects of mercy, and therefore they may do what they will, they ſhall be ſure to be ſaved, this were ſomething; but there is no ſuch promiſe as this in the book of God, but as he has decreed any to ſalvation, ſo he has appointed them to uſe the means that tend to that end, as the Apoſtle ſaith, *He hath choſen us in him, before the foundations of the world were laid*; but what follows? Why, *That we ſhould be holy and without blame before him in love:* where God decrees an end, he likewiſe appoints the means that muſt be uſed towards the accompliſhing of that end. Eph. 1. 4.

3 Conſider, you would count it a very ridiculous arguing to make this inference in natural things, and therefore it is as vain

and fooliſh to argue thus in ſpiritual things; for God hath determined how long you and I, and every one of us ſhall live, and when and what death we ſhall die, and all the World cannot alter this Decree of his. Now becauſe theſe things are decreed by God, and his Decrees are unalterable; for us to argue that therefore we will not eat, drink, or ſleep, but expoſe our ſelves to danger, and run into miſchiefs, and the like; why, you cannot but count this very irrational, even in natural things, and therefore much more in ſpiritual things. I have read of a man that was one of the great fomenters of this opinion I am now ſpeaking againſt, and he falling into an extream fit of ſickneſſe, ſent for a Doctor of Phyſick to come to him; and being come, deſired him to adminiſter ſomething to him for his recovery, and to remove his diſtemper; the Doctor knowing him to be a man of that judgement, told him, Sir, you know every mans time is determined, and God has decreed how long you ſhall live, and his decrees are unchangeable, therefore what need you take any Phyſick, or uſe any means? for if he hath appointed you ſhall recover of this diſtemper, you ſhal recover; he anſwered, It is true, but yet would not be perſwaded to neglect the means, but deſired him to adminiſter ſomething to him: the Phyſician did ſo, and by the bleſſing of God upon it, reſtored him to his former health, whereby he was ever after convinced of the errour of his former opinion: you are therefore to conſider, that as God hath appointed the end, ſo likewiſe he hath appointed the means tending and cooperating to that end.

4 Conſider further, that though a man doth know what the decrees of God are concerning him, yet this ſhould not be to him a bar or hindrance unto holineſſe, or a ſpur or provocation unto ungodlineſs, becauſe though God ſhould never ordain thee to life, yet thou do'ſt owe homage or ſervice to him, as he is thy Creatour; though thou couldeſt know (which thou canſt not) that God hath appointed thee unto wrath, yet this can be no plea for thee to run out in rebellion againſt God; for as he is thy Creator and Maker, and thou the work of his hands, he may lay claim to homage, ſervice, and ſubjection from thee as his due debt; you owe theſe to him as he is thy Creatour.

But

But if thou do'ſt know, that whereof one may be certainly aſſured, that thou art not appointed to be a veſſel of wrath, but an object of mercy, why then there are ſtronger and greater obligations and bonds laid upon thee, to ſerve him with chearfulneſs, and to be frequent in the exerciſes of holineſs. And thus I have done with the ſecond particular.

3 We come now to the third Queſtion in order, and that is this, whether God in appointing any man to life and ſalvation, hath reſpect to their foreſeen faith or good works? whether the foreſight of faith or good works be the impulſive cauſe that moves God to decree any men to ſalvation?

Queſt. 3. Whether foreſeen faith and good works be the impulſive cauſe that moves God to decree any to ſalvation.

In anſwering of this queſtion, I ſhall lay down to you theſe three Concluſions.

Anſ. 1 Concluſion. Rom. 8. 29, 30.

1 It is moſt true, that thoſe whom God appoints unto ſalvation, ſhall before they do obtein it, have grace and holineſs in their hearts: this is very true, for whom God does predeſtinate, them he will alſo call.

2 It is as true, that thoſe that God did appoint to ſalvation, he did foreſee that they ſhould be holy, that all thoſe whom he had ordained to life ſhould be ſanctified. But,

3 Though God did foreſee that ſuch men ſhould be holy yet his foreſeeing of it was not the impulſive cauſe why they were ordained to life and ſalvation. God did foreſee that every man whom he did predeſtinate, ſhould be called; but yet Gods foreſeeing of what good works thoſe men ſhould perform, this was not the impulſive cauſe that moved God to predeſtinate them to eternal life, which I ſhall prove and make good to you from Scripture, as in *Romans* 11. 5. 6. *There is*, ſayes the Apoſtle, *a remnant according to election*; but of what election? Why, *the election of grace*; if this election were made for foreſight of good works, it muſt be called an election of works, that being the moving cauſe of it according to ſome mens opinions; but here you ſee it is called an election of grace. So, 2 *Timothy* 1. 9. *Who hath ſaved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpoſe and grace, which was given us in Chriſt before the world began.* So again, in *Epheſ.* 1. 5. ſaith the Apoſtle, *Having predeſtinated us unto the adoption of Children by Jeſus Chriſt to himſelf, ac-*

Rom. 9. 5, 6, 7.

cording to the good pleasure of his will, not for their foreseen faith or good works: and so again in the ninth Verse, having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he had purposed in himself; and again in the eleventh Verse, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.

It is meerly the good will and pleasure of God, that is the impulsive cause or motive, why he ordains or appoints any men to obtein salvation.

Reasons why God did never elect any man to salvation upon prevision of his good works.

But now I shall demonstrate this, and make it clear and evident to you by reason, that God did never elect or chuse any man to be a Vessel of glory, and to obtein salvation upon foresight or prevision of his good works, and that first,

Reason 1.

1 Because God justifies no man for his having of good works, and therefore God elects none upon the fore-sight of his good works. God does not justifie men for the having and performing of good works; but we are justified freely by his grace; and if we seek to be justified by works; we are fallen from grace: much less therefore can a man be elected to salvation, because of Gods foreseeing of his good works.

Rom. 3. 24.

Reason 2.

2 Good works in us are the fruits and effects of our election, and therefore they cannot be the cause of it; the same thing cannot be both the cause and the effect of another thing: now good works they are the result of our election, for whom God hath chosen and elected, he hath chosen them to this very end, that they might be holy, and without blame before him in love. *Acts* 22. 14. It was said of *Paul, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth.*

Ephes. 1. 4.

Reason 3.

3 If this were so, men would have something whereof to boast before God; for if God did elect them, because he did foresee they would be holy and just, and upright, or the like, then they might boast and say, Lord, I am not so much bound to thee as beholding to my selfe, that I am saved; but God will have no flesh to glory in his presence: and he did elect us to salvation, not for any beauty or comelines, there was in us more then others, there was nothing in us could either desire or deserve his love, but only out of his free grace and mercie; he set his love upon

upon us, becauſe he wil have mercie on whom he wil have mercie; and this makes us the more engaged to God in all the bonds of thankfulneſſe and obedience, and to admire and magnifie his free grace and mercie towards us.

Reaſon 4.

4 All thoſe good works you can poſſibly perform, cannot carry any equivalencie or proportion to that ſalvation that God doth chuſe you to: our ſalvation is perfect and compleat; but the beſt of our ſervices are not ſo, but full of imperfections and frailties, there is no proportion between them, and therefore they can be no impulſive cauſe why God ſhould chuſe any man to life and ſalvation for the foreſight of them.

Reaſon 5.

5 If election doth depend upon foreſeen Faith or Works, then Infants ſo dying cannot be elected, becauſe they neither have faith nor good works: But many Infants are elected.

Reaſon 6.

6 We are not elected for Chriſt. ſake, therefore not for our own ſakes. Chriſt indeed is the cauſe of our ſalvation, but not the cauſe of our election. Chriſt himſelfe was predeſtinated, 2 *Pet.* 1. 10. and therefore he could not be the cauſe of our predeſtination. It is true, we are ſaid to be choſen in Chriſt, *Epheſ.* 1. 4. We are choſen in Chriſt, as in a common perſon, he was the firſt perſon elected in order, and we in him. Suppoſe a new Kingdome to be ſet up, a new King is choſen, all his ſucceſſors are choſen in him: God hath erected a Kingdom of glory, and hath choſen Chriſt for the King of it, and in him us, whom he hath made Kings and Prieſts unto the moſt high God.

And thus I have done with the Doctrinal part, we come now to the application: and the uſe that I ſhall make of it, ſhall be only to draw from hence three or four practicall inferences, and ſo conclude.

Several practical inferences from the Doctrine of election.

1 Is it ſo that God hath appointed a certain number of men and women to obtein ſalvation, and not to be objects of his wrath, ô then I beſeech you in the fear of God, all you that do belong to the election of grace, that you would take heed you do not undervalue and proſtitute thoſe ſouls of yours (to baſe & diſhonourable employments) that God hath appointed unto glory: ſhall that ſoul of thine which is a veſſel of glory, be employed in doing the Devils drudgery, and in ſinning againſt, and

diſ-

dishonouring of God? As it is unseemly for a vessel of Gold to be put to so base a use as to hold a mans excrements: so is it unsuitable for you that are vessels of honour, to have your souls filled with the dung and filth of sin and wickedness. Take heed therefore of prostituting your souls to sinful and servile employments.

2 Inference. 2 If this be so, then this confutes the Doctrine of the *Sadduces*, that held there was no resurrection of the body, no immortality of the soul, no salvation for Saints, no damnation for sinners: how could they have been of this judgement, if they had believed this Doctrine, that God to all eternity did elect some to salvation: and reject others to damnation? the Decrees of God must be false, if these opinions of theirs be true. Take heed of being practical Atheists, of living so in the World, as if there were neither salvation for Saints, nor damnation for sinners.

3 Inference. 3 Let this teach you patiently and contentedly to undergo all those troubles and afflictions you meet with all here in this life; seeing God hath appointed you to a Crown, why should not you be patient under a cross? seeing God hath appointed you to obtein salvation hereafter, why should not you be contented to bear any affliction here? What though God hath appointed thee to a prison, or persecution, or misery here in this life, so long as he hath not appointed thee to Hell-fire hereafter? This light affliction which is but for a moment worketh for you a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, and therefore let this bear up your hearts.

4 Inference. 4 If this be so, that there are a certain number of people appointed by God to obtein salvation, ô then rest not satisfied, give no rest to your eyes, nor slumber to your eye-lids, till you finde some pledges and seals in your own hearts, that you are some of those that are not appointed unto wrath, but to obtein salvation, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

The

The third Sermon.

1 THESSALONIANS 5.9.

For God hath not appointed us unto wrath, but to obtein Salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.

I Shall now in order, to the further prosecution of this great Doctrine of Predestination, lay you down seven doctrinal Conclusions concerning it. As first,

Doctrinaal Conclusions touching Predestination.

1 That a man that is ordained and appointed by God from all eternity to obtein salvation, may know that he is so appointed and ordained; not only the Lord knows who are his, but also man may certainly know that he is appointed by God to obtein salvation. But now the Papists they are of another judgement, and look upon this truth as a very pernicious and presumptuous doctrine, that a man may be certainly sure of his salvation; they hold he can onely have a conjectural faith, and not a faith of assurance. But it is a manifest untruth; for why should our Saviour, *Luk.* 10.20. bid his Disciples *rejoyce not so much because the spirits were subject to them, as because their names were written in Heaven:* how could they rejoyce in this priviledge, if they were ignorant of it, or could not know that their names were written in the book of life? So in *Eph.* 1 5. says the Apostle, *Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children, they were assured of their Adoption*; so in *Rev.* 2.17. *To him that overcommeth will I give to eat of the hidden Manna, and will give him a white stone, and in that stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.* The new name here is regeneration, and the white stone is absolution: they have a white stone given them, that is, the Lord shall give them a seal, a pledge in their own hearts, that their sins are forgiven, and that they are brought into a state of grace and salvation, and

and he that hath this white ſtone ſhall know that he hath it.

But I ſhall prove and clear this further to you by demonſtration, that a man may be aſſured of his election, and that firſt,

1 Becauſe God commands and enjoyns men to labour to make their calling and election ſure, as in 2 *Pet.* 1.10. *Wherefore brethren*, ſayes the Apoſtle, *give all diligence to make your calling and election ſure*; not ſure on Gods part, but ſure in reference to your knowledge of it; and if it were not a thing attainable, the Apoſtle would never enjoyn us to do it: therefore it is not a thing impoſſible, but which may be obteined, and hath been obteined by many of Gods precious ſervants.

2. Other men may have a conjectural knowledge of our ſalvation, as in 1 *Theſ.* 1.4. *Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.* *Paul* did give a ſtrong conjecture that the *Theſſalonians* were elected of God; why now, if another man may gueſſe ſo right of us, then much more may we be aſſured of it our ſelves. So again, in *Phil.* 4.3. *Paul* ſpeaking of ſome of his fellow-labourers, ſaith he, *whoſe names are in the book of life*: if others may know that our names are in the book of life, then much more our ſelves: we may be ſure of our vocation, and if ſo, then may we alſo be ſure of our election: for effectual vocation is an infallible mark of our election, *Rom.* 8.30. And that we may be ſure of our vocation, the Scripture often mentions; and this is the firſt Doctrinal Concluſion, thoſe that are elected and appointed by God to obtain ſalvation, may know and be fully aſſured that they are ſo appointed.

2 Concluſion.

2 Obſerve this Concluſion, that no man can aſſuredly know that he is elected and appointed by God to obtein ſalvation, by climbing and ſearching into the decrees and ſecrets of God; for who hath known the minde of the Lord, or who hath been his Counſellor? but we are to ſearch and finde it out by the efficacie of the decrees of God upon our hearts, if we finde thoſe fruits and effects of election upon our hearts, that do accompanie thoſe that are elected, then we may conclude that we are elected: In 2 *Pet.* 1.10. ſayes the Apoſtle, *Give all diligence to make your calling and election ſure.* Election was before Calling, but here Calling is put before Election; to note, that though election be before vocation, yet a man cannot know his election

but

but by his vocation, and therefore if you have a seal in your own heart of your effectual vocation, from thence you may undoubtedly conclude your election, *Romans* 8.30. for whom he hath predestinated, them he hath also called; we may know our election as it is operative, and efficacious upon our hearts, in carrying us on in all the ways of new obedience; we must first prove our vocation, and then by that our election. If you do not try your election, and prove it by your sanctification, they are but wilde conjectures, fond perswasions, enthusiastical delusions, and bold presumptions of a deceived heart.

3 Take this for a Conclusion, that though a man may know, and ought to know that he is elected and appointed by God to obtein salvation, yet he ought not to know, nay, he cannot know that he is appointed unto wrath. A man may make his election sure, but he cannot make his reprobation, and damnation sure: we finde some men in Scripture that have been sure of their election, but none that have bin sure of their damnation. A man that runs on in wicked and sinful courses may say that he is not called, but he cannot say he is not elected, no not the wickedst man in the World (except he have sinned the sin against the Holy Ghost;) for though he may run on a long time in sinful and pernicious courses, yet God may at last call him home to himself. 3 Conclusion.

4 That Gods decrees and appointments touching mens future estate and condition are irrevocable and unalterable; in 2 *Tim.* 2.19. The foundation of God standeth sure, that is, the decree and purpose of God, touching mans salvation, is unchangeable, it standeth sure: If the Laws of the *Medes* and *Persians* were so absolute, that they could not be reverst, then much lesse can the decrees of God be reverst. No man that is not elected, can be elected, and no man that is elected, can be damned. *John* 6.39. sayes Christ. *This is the Fathers will which hath sent me, that of all those which he hath given me, I should lose none*: there is not one of them lost that were given unto Christ by Gods decree, *Rom.* 11.22. God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew; those that God did first purpose to bring to eternall life, he cast away none of them. 4 Conclusion.

But now the Papists and others do very much oppose this Doctrine, and look upon the Decrees of God as mutable and va- *Object.*

various, and at this day this opinion breaks out amongst us, there are many that hold the Decrees of God are changeable, and there are three places of Scripture they alledge to prove it. The first is that in *John* 6.70. where Christ sayes to his Disciples, *Have I not chosen twelve, and one of you is a Devill?* from whence they argue, that all those that are chosen of God, shall not obtein salvation by him.

Ans. There is a twofold chusing, an external and an internal chusing, and between these you must distinguish; where Christ says, *Have I not chosen twelve?* he speaks there of an external choice to the Office of the Apostleship. *Judas* was not chosen in Gods eternal Decree of Election; for he was the son of perdition, and Hell was his own place; but onely externally to be an Apostle.

Object. 2. Another place of Scripture they alledge against the immutability of Gods Decrees, is that in *Exod.* 32.32,33. where *Moses* prays, that if God would not forgive the sins of the people, he should *blot out his name out of his Book. And the Lord said unto him, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my Book.* Now say they, If the Names of those that are written in Gods Book of Life, may be blotted out, then the Decrees of God are changeable. So in *Revel.* 22.19. it is said there, *That if any man shall take from the words of the Book of this Prophecie, God shall take away his part out of the Book of Life.*

Ans. *Answ.* I shall answer this Objection very briefly. Divines observe that there are three sorts of Books attributed to God in Scripture.

1 A Book of Providence, in *Psal.* 139.16. *In thy Book were all my Members written*, that is, the Book of Gods providence.

2 There is a Book of Gods judgements, in *Revel.* 20.12. *And I saw the dead, small and great stand before God, and the Books were opened, and the dead were judged out of those things that were written in those Books.* When Christ shall come to judgement, there shall be a great Book of Accompts opened, wherein all things that are done here upon the earth, are recorded.

3 There is a Book of Life, wherein when any mans name is once written, it can never be blotted out again; But the Book of Life mentioned in Scripture, hath a double signification: sometimes

times by the Book of Life is ment, the eternal decree and purpose of God, touching those that shal be saved by him; & in this sense it is to be taken in *Phil.* 4. 3. whose names are in the Book of Life: and so in *Luk.* 10. 20. Rejoyce, because your names are written in the Book of Life. And ordinarily in the New Testament, the Book of Life is to be taken for the eternal Decree and purpose of God, touching those that shall be saved.

2. There is a Book of Life in Scripture, which is to be taken, not for the eternal Decree of God, but for the providences of God, and the special care and preservation of God over his Church. The preserving his people under the wings of his providence. This is called the Book of Life, as in *Exod.* 32. 33. *Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my Book*, that is, that man that shall go on in sin pertinaciously, obstinately, and presumptuously, I will blot his name out of my book, that is, cast him out of my protection and providence, he shall be an excommunicated man. And in this sense it is taken by *Moses*, when he desired God to blot his name out of his Book.

So sayes God in *Ezek.* 13. 9. *My hand shall be upon the Prophets that see vanity, and that divine lies, they shall not be in the assembly of my people, neither shall they be written in the writing of the house of Israel*; which is all one, as if he had said, They shall not be written in the Book of Life; not to be written in the Book of Life in this sense, is to be excommunicated out of the Church.

I shall confirm this Doctrine to you further by demonstration, that the Decrees of God are unchangeable and irrevocable; for were it otherwise, 1 God must needs be a mutable God, which is directly contrary to what the Scripture affirms of him, namely, *That with him there is no variableness, nor shadow of change*, Jam. 1. 17.

2 Jesus Christ (may I speak it with reverence) would be a liar, and falsifie his Word, if this were not true; for sayes he in *John* 10. 28. *I give unto my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.* Christ would not be as good as his word, if any of those that are given him by his Father, should be lost, or any of those that are appointed to salvation should come short of it.

3 If the decrees of God were mutable, then *Pauls* Golden Chain in *Rom.* 8.30. would be broken: Whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called them; he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified. We come now to a fifth Conclusion.

5 Conclusion. 5 That the decrees of God in reference to salvation run but to the fewest number of Man-kinde in the world; Gods decrees touching the ordaining of men to life, run but to a very small and little remnant: the world of unbelievers are like flocks of *Goats*, very numerous, whereas the elect of God are but like sheep scattered here and there upon the mountains. The wicked are like weeds that grow every where; but the godly are trees of righteousnes, of Christs own planting, planted but very sparingly in the world; Christs flock is but a little, very little flock, in comparison of the world; there is but a remnant according to the election of grace, a very small remnant that shall obtain salvation: the rest are hardned.

6 Conclusion. 6 Though the decrees of God in reference to mens salvation, extend but to a very few, yet this is no ground at all for us to have hard thoughts of God, or to look upon him as cruel and unmerciful: the reasons of this were in part hinted before.

1 Because God is not bound to save any, and therefore it is no act of cruelty, or injustice in him that he saves so few.

2 God hath a sovereignty over all his creatures, and may do with them what he pleaseth, and none can say unto him, What doest thou?

3 The Lord would have shewed more mercy, had he saved but one man in the world, then he would have done rigour of justice, had he condemned all, because all have sinned, and thereby deserved damnation, and God is not bound to save any of them.

4 God hath dealt better with us then he did with the Angels that sinned; for you know all the Angels in Heaven that sinned, in aspiring to be like the most High, they were all thrown down and damned, not one of them being saved, but are all reserved in chains of darkness, to the judgement of the great day; but yet notwithstanding, though all Mankinde had sinned, and so fell short of the glory of God, yet they were not all con-

condemned, and that because Jesus Christ took not upon him the nature of Angels, but of man; and therefore though all the Angels that sinned perished, yet though we have all sinned, we do not all perish, but there is a remnant reserved from death and damnation, and appointed to obtain salvation.

5. The world fares the better for those very persons that are within the Decrees of God to obtain salvation; for were it not for Gods Decree of election, that such a number of men should be saved, the World should not have continued to this day, and it shall continue no longer then till the number of the elect are fulfilled; and then the Elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the earth and all that is therein shall be burnt up: God gives deliverance and safety, and preservation to the World for the Elects sake; we are beholding to the Decrees of God in reference to the Elect, that the World continues to this day. The men of the World fare better in regard of the comforts of this life for the sake of Gods Elect. The dayes of affliction that came upon *Jerusalem* and all *Judea*, were shortned for the Elects sake, *Mark* 13.20. For their sakes it was that *Israel was not made as Sodom, and like unto Gomorrah, that a remnant was left*, *Isai* 1.9. So it was, *Isai*. 65.8. *Thus, saith the Lord, As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it: so will I do for my servants sakes, that I may not destroy them all.* And *Job* witnesseth *that an Island is delivered by the pureness of the hands*, *Job* 22.30.

7 Conclusion.

Lastly, observe this Conclusion, that though you are bound to pray for the remission of your sins, and the sanctification of your nature, yet you are not bound by God, to pray for your election, why? because this Work is perfectly done already, as we are not to pray for the Creation of the World, because that work is perfected; so neither are we to pray for our electi- because that work is fully done already. Works perfectly doue, we are not to pray for; but we must pray for those effects and fruits of Predestination and Election, as Vocation, Sanctification, Remission, Regeneration, and the like; but not for Election.

Use 1. Several marks of our election.

We come now to the Application; and the Use that I shall make of what hath been said, shall be; first, by way of information and trial, that you may know whether you are in the num-

ber

ber of those that are appointed by God to salvation or no, and then by way of consolation and comfort; first, for trial.

Answ. 1. If you be within the Decrees of God for salvation, then sooner or later God will cause the power of his Word to come with authority and conviction upon your conscience, as in 1 *Thess.* 1. 5. *Knowing, Brethren beloved,* (saies the Apostle) *your election of God; for our Gospel came not to you in word onely, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost.* The Word will come with power and conviction upon your consciences sooner or later, if you belong to the election of grace.

2 You shall be sooner or later effectually called; *for whom God hath predestinated, them he will also call,* Rom. 8. 30.

3 If the Lord hath ordained thee unto salvation, he will beget and increase sanctification in thee; likewise in 1 *Pet.* 1. 2. *Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus.* All the Elect of God shall have the sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and the sprinkling of the blood of Christ upon their hearts, sooner or later.

The

The fourth Sermon.

1 THESSALONIANS 5.9.

For God hath not appointed us unto wrath, but to obtain Salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.

I Shall now speak something to you by way of consolation and comfort, lest there be any poor humble dejected soul amongst you, that fears he is rejected of God, and not in the number of those appointed to salvation.

1 Let me tell you this to your comfort, that when I lay down the fruits and effects of election to you, it is not to be understood, that these should be in you as soon as you were born; for *Paul*, though he was elected, yet he was a man of a very wicked life and conversation thirty years together; and therefore do not say you are cast off and rejected of God, because you are so wicked, for a man may live a long time in sin, and yet be elected by God to salvation for all that; as in *Tit.*3.3. sayes the Apostle, *We our selves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts, and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another; but* (sayes he) *afterwards the kindness and love of God our Saviour appeared towards us*; intimating, that an elect man may be for a long time a slave to his lusts, and live in sin; when yet it is the purpose of God to bring him to glory.

2 When I press these things as signs of your election, I do not press the having them actually, but habitually; for in children, though they have not an actual conviction from the word, yet they may have grace habitually in them, which is sufficient; there must be either habitual grace, or actual in every one that goes to Heaven.

3 Though

3 Though you do not finde and feel these effects and fruits of Election sensibly in you, yet if they be there in reality, it is enough to bring you to glory. I do not presse the having of these things gradually, but sincerely; an elect person may want many a degree of grace, but if he have them in sincerity, though in the least measure, it is a sufficient evidence of his election.

We come now to the last part of the text, *but to obtein salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.* In these words, beloved, are laid down the glorious titles that are given to the Son of God, he is a Lord, a Jesus, and a Christ, and he is our Lord Jesus Christ.

Before I come to raise a Doctrine from the words, it will be needful to do these four things: 1 To explain these titles to you. 2 To note something to you from the position of the words: and thirdly, from the composition of the words; and lastly, from the application or appropriation of these titles.

1 For the explication, *by our Lord Jesus Christ:* the first title is *Lord*, and this is a name of dominion and sovereignty, and implies a power and strength in Christ, to carry on the work of our salvation. If Christ were a Jesus and not a Lord, he could not save us.

2 He is *the Lord Jesus*; as Lord is a title of Dominion, so Jesus is a title of Mercy and Bounty, and signifies a Saviour; he is not only a Lord, and so hath power to do us good; but he is also a Jesus, and so he hath a will to do us good. The dialect of the Old Testament is the *Lord our God*, but never *the Lord Jesus*, till in the New Testament.

3 He is *the Lord Jesus Christ*, (that is) he is Gods anointed, he was set apart and appointed by God to carry on the great work of mans salvation; Christ is a name of office and function.

2 I observe further from the position of these titles, here is Lord put before Jesus: 1 To let us know, that we can never look upon Christ as a Jesus, a Saviour, if we do not take him and own him as our Lord, to rule over us, and reign in us; Christ can never do the work of a Saviour and Redeemer towards you, unless you have your wils ruled and governed by him, and yield obedience and subjection to him. 2 To inform us that Christ could never be a person able to accomplish the work of our salvation,

vation, if he were not a Lord; and therefore his divine nature is put in the first place, to assure us that he is able to carry on the work of our salvation.

3. I note further from the composition of the words, it is not said, by *our Lord Christ Jesus*, but *by our Lord Jesus Christ*: the divine and humane nature of Christ being united in one person, the *Lord* and *Jesus* together; to these two titles in one person there is an unquestionable power and efficacy to carry on the salvation of the sons of men. Many men may have a will and desire to relieve those that are in necessity, and do good to others, but do want power and ability to do it, and others may have abilities, and yet want a will to do it. Power without will, would be but an unkinde ableness; and will without power, would be but an unable kindness; if Christ had not bin Lord, he could not have saved us; if he had not been Jesus, he would not have saved us.

But now Jesus Christ he hath both power and will to do us good, he neither wants power, because he is a Lord, nor doth he want a will, because he is a Jesus; and therefore well may the Apostle joyn these together, *we obtein salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ*.

4. From the appropriation of these Titles, he doth not say by a Lord Jesus Christ, or by the Lord Jesus Christ, but by our Lord Jesus Christ; you will never obtein salvation by Christ, if you have not a peculiar interest in him. Beloved, it will nothing avail you that there is a Christ, and a Jesus, and a Lord, unless you can claim this appropriating tearm, to say he is yours; we obtein salvation, not by a Lord, the Lord Jesus Christ, but by our Jesus Christ. And thus have I spent a little time in hinting to you what is observable from the explication, position, composition, and appropriation of these words; the Doctrine from hence that I intend to insist on is this.

That the Lord Jesus Christ is the person appointed by God the Father, by whom all the elect of God shall obtein salvation; *We are not appointed unto wrath, but to obtein salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.* *Doctrine.*

In the handling of this point, I shall first premise three Cautions, and then answer and resolve some Questions. *Cautions.*

1. Take this Caution; though Jesus Christ be the person by whom we must obtain salvation, yet all the world shall not be saved by him, there are but few persons in the world that shall obtain salvation by Jesus Christ.

2. That there are no more saved by Jesus Christ, who is the person appointed by God for men to obtain salvation by, the fault is not in Christ, but in our selves, for there is vertue and efficacy enough in Christ to save as many worlds as there are men in the world, but the fault lies in us, *We will not come unto Christ, that we may have life, Joh.5.40.*

3. Observe this Caution, though Jesus Christ be the Person appointed by God to carry on the work of mans salvation, yet this does no way incourage any man to a neglect and carelesnes in working out his own salvation; for though Christ must save thee meritoriously, yet thou must be diligent in working out thy own salvation, by way of applying the merits and righteousnes of Christ to thy self, *Phil.2.12.* The common rule of *Augustine* is true, Though God made man without his help, yet he will not save him without his help; by way of duty man must use those means that God hath prescribed in his Word, in order to the working out of his own salvation. We come now to the handling of those Questions which I promised to resolve, which are these two.

Qui fecit te sine te, non salvabit te sine te.

Quest. 1. What kinde of salvation is it that we obtain by Christ?

Quest. 2. How it may be said that Christ is the Person that God hath appointed by whom we shall obtein salvation?

Quest. 1 What kinde of salvation is it that we do enjoy by Christ?

Answ. 1 It is a perfect salvation; secondly, a salvation singly obtained: and thirdly, an everlasting salvation: there are these three excellent properties in Christ, that is the Saviour of the Elect: he saves them perfectly, he saves them singly, and he saves them everlastingly.

1. Christ is said to save the Elect perfectly, *Heb.7.25. He is able to save them to the utmost that come unto God by him*; but though Christ saves to the utmost, yet we must come to him first. Christ saves perfectly, he saves the body, and he saves thy soul;

ſoul; he ſaves thee from ſin and from the puniſhment of ſin; he ſaves thee from the filth of ſin, and ſaves thee from the guilt of ſin. Chriſt hath gotten a perfect Conqueſt over all our enemies, he is not a Saviour that does his work by halves, but he ſaves perfectly.

2 Chriſt ſaves his Elect ſingly, he hath no Copartner in the carrying on of the work of their ſalvation, *Act.*4.12. *Neither is there ſalvation in any other, for there is no other Name under Heaven given among men, whereby we muſt be ſaved*; There is no other Perſon, nor way, nor means in the world to ſave men by, but by Jeſus Chriſt. I may allude to this place, he trod the wine preſſe of his Fathers wrath alone, and of all the people there was none with him, he performed the work ſingly; and therefore the Church of *Rome* does very ill to joyn good works and interceſſion of Saints as Copartners with Chriſt in the work of Redemption; for Chriſt did the work alone, and therefore the Pſalmiſt tells us, *Pſal.*49.7,8. *No man can by any means redeem his brother, or give to God a ranſome for him, for the redemption of their ſoul is precious.*

3 Chriſt ſaves everlaſtingly, he does not ſave as men are ſaved here below, here a man may be delivered out of one danger, and yet fall into another; be ſaved from one miſchief, and yet be deſtroyed by another: but now Chriſt ſaves us everlaſtingly, *Heb.*5.9. *He is become the author of eternal ſalvation to all that obey him.* And thus much for the kindes of ſalvation, Chriſt ſaves perfectly, ſingly, and everlaſtingly.

Queſt. 2 How may Chriſt be ſaid to obtain ſalvation for the Elect? The Philoſophers have counted Chriſtians very fools for them to expect ſavation by another mans ſufferings, and hope for life by another mans death; they lookt upon the Doctrine of Chriſts ſufferings as a very ridiculous thing. Now (beloved) I ſhall ſhew you in four particulars what it is that Chriſt hath done, to which the Scripture aſcribes the obtaining of our ſalvation. As 1 The Scripture aſcribes our ſalvation to the ſufferings and paſſions of Chriſt. 2 To the reſurrection of Chriſt. 3 To the aſcenſion. And laſtly, to the interceſſion of Chriſt. *Queſt.*2.

1 The ſalvation of men in Scripture is aſcribed to the ſufferings and bitter paſſions of Chriſt; to this it is aſcribed meri-

toriously, this was the price *Christ* paid; and hence it is that you meet with such phrases as these so often, that *we are saved by his blood, and through faith in his blood*, in *Rom.*5.9. *Heb.*10.19. 10 in *Heb.*5.8,9. *Being made perfect through sufferings, he became the Author of eternal salvation to all that obey him*: so that here you may see the great grace, and infinite love of Jesus Christ, in suffering for us, that rather then we should lose our souls, he would lose his own life; ô behold and admire the inestimable love of the Son of God; your sins are the price of blood, and all your pardons are written in characters of blood: by *Christs* death we live, and by his stripes we are healed, if *Christ* had not died, we must; but he came into the world in the form of a servant, and willingly laid down his life for us, that so by his death we might live eternally. Our salvation is ascribed to the passions & sufferings of *Christ*, as the meritorious cause of it.

Revel.5.9.

2 It is ascribed to the resurrection of Christ, whereby he manifested to the World, that he was a perfect Saviour, this is ascribed to it manifestly; for had *Christ* died and not risen again, every one would have thought it very improbable and unlikely, that he that could not raise himself frō the dead, should yet save others from death: therefore sayes the Apostle in 1 *Pet.*1.3,4. *Blessed be God, who has begotten us again to a lievly hope, by the resurrection of Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fades not away, reserved in Heaven for us*; not only by his death, but by his resurrection, we have a lively hope, that seeing *Christ* hath conquered death, and the grave, and all the powers of darkness, that therefore he is a perfect Saviour of all the Elect of God: so in 1 *Pet.*3.21. *We are saved by Baptisme, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ*, that manifesting to the World, that Jesus *Christ* was an absolute Saviour, and a conquerour over death and the grave. It is said, *Rom* 1.4. *Christ was declared to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead.* Rom.5.10. *For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.*

3 The Scriptures likewise ascribe our salvation to the ascension of Christ, to that it is ascribed preparatorily, after that he was fourty dayes among his Disciples, he was taken up, or ascended into Heaven; but before he went, he tels his Disciples,

Behold,

Behold, I go before, but it is to carry on your ſalvation for you; in *John* 14.2. *I go away, ſayes Chriſt; but I go to prepare a place for you, if it were not ſo, I would have told you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to my ſelf, that where I am, there you may be alſo, Chriſt* is gone before into Heaven to prepare a place for us, he muſt not onely prepare our hearts for heaven, but he muſt alſo prepare heaven for us: we enter into the holy of holies by Jeſus Chriſt.

4 And laſtly, it is aſcribed to the interceſſion of Chriſt, and that applicatively. This the Apoſtle expreſſeth in *Heb.*7.25. *Wherefore he is alſo able to ſave to the uttermoſt, thoſe that come unto God by him, ſeeing he ever liveth to make interceſſion for them.* So in Rom.8.34. *Who is he that condemneth? it is Chriſt that died, yea, rather that is riſen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who alſo maketh interceſſion for us.* Chriſt did not onely ſuffer a great deal for us, but he aroſe from the dead, and aſcended into Heaven, and there he intercedes for us at his Fathers right hand, and all this to carry on the work of our ſalvation; we have the benefit both of his paſſion, reſurrection, aſcenſion, and interceſſion in order to our ſalvation.

I ſhall now make ſome Application; onely an Objection muſt firſt be removed. Application.

Me thinks, I heare a licentious Libertine reaſon thus with himſelf: is this ſo, that I muſt expect ſalvation by *Chriſt*; and and he hath done and ſuffered ſo much to obtein it; why then I hope that in *Chriſt* I am a happy man, and in a very good condition.

Anſw. This that I ſay may be true, and yet thou never be in the better condition, for Chriſt is not appointed by God to carry on thy ſalvation, unleſs there be theſe four things wrought in thy heart, before thou canſt receive any benefit or comfort from him, (*i.e.*) he that would receive benefit by *Chriſt*, muſt look upon him; and receive him, as well for his Lord, as for his Jeſus; not onely to take him as a Jeſus to obtein mercy and ſalvation by him, but likewiſe to look upon him as his Lord, and to perform all obedience, and yield all ſubjection to him: *God hath exalted Chriſt to be a Prince, and a Saviour, by whom men ſhould receive remiſſion of ſins.* Acts 5.31.

You

You must not onely look to be saved by his blood, but also to be ruled by his command; I may apply to this what *Alexander* said of his two friends; sayes he, *Hephestion* loves me as I am *Alexander*, but *Craterus* loves me as I am King *Alexander*; one for his person, the other for his benefits he received by him: So some love Christ as he is a Lord, and an executor of justice and judgement; but others love him because of the benefit and advantage they receive by him, because he delivers them from wrath to come, else they would never look after a *Messiah*.

2 If Jesus Christ be the person ordained by God to carry on the work of thy salvation, then know this, that sooner or later the Gospel shall come upon thy heart with an irresistible power, in *Rom.* 1.16. *To every one that believeth, it is the power of God.* So in the 1 *Cor.* 1.8. *The preaching of the cross is to them that are saved the power of God.*

3 If Christ be thy Saviour he will not only free thee from the damnation of sin, but also from the dominion and power of sin. Christ will not onely be a Saviour to free thee from Hell, but also from sin. And therefore is Christ called a Saviour, *because he saves his people from their sins*, *Matth.* 1.21. from the dominion and reigning power of sin; and therefore, beloved, you that lay claim to a Saviour, and a Jesus to pardon all your sins, and yet cannot say that God hath mortified, and subdued any sin in you, you are very much deceived, for Jesus Christ saves from sin as well as from hell.

4 Know thus much, that if Christ be thy Saviour, he will work thy heart to an Evangelical obedience to his will, in *Heb.* 5. 9. *Christ is become the Authour of eternal salvation*, but to whom? why, *to all that do obey him*; and therefore you that continue in rebellion and stubbornness of heart against God, running on in wayes of sinfulness, and will not bring your necks under Christs yoak, you deceive your selves, and lay a presumptuous claim to Christ, and to salvation and happiness by him.

Use 1. If this be so, that Christ is the person by whom all the elect shall obtein salvation, why then do not ascribe thy salvation to any thing but only to Jesus Christ, neither to Saints or Angels, or men, not to the intercession of the Virgin *Mary*, not to any thing within thee, or without thee; but only to Jesus Christ,

Christ, who saves to the uttermost all that come unto God by him.

2 Be convinced of thy own insufficiencie and inability to save thy selfe, every man is born with merits in his heart, and naturally thinks himselfe sufficient to be his own Saviour: one man depends upon his duties and services, another upon his graces, &c. but you should labour to be cast out of all conceits of your own strength, and righteousnesse, and sufficiencie, and wholly depend upon Christ who is the person appointed by God, to carry on the work of thy salvation.

3 Think nothing too much to do, too great to suffer, too dear to part withall, for that Christ who thought nothing too much to do, or too grievous to suffer, that so he might accomplish the work of thy salvation: if Christ left heaven for thee, do not thou think it much to lose earth for him, if he came out of his Fathers bosome for thee, then be not thou unwilling to leave Father or Mother, or Friends, or any thing for him; if he underwent sufferings, reproaches, afflictions, persecutions, yea, death it selfe for thee, why should you repine at, or be impatient under any trouble or misery you meet with here in the world for his sake? We should consider with our selves, that if Christ be the person appointed by God to carry on our salvation, and he could not do it but by suffering (and undergoing the punishment due to our sins) by his resurrection, ascension, and intercession, we should count nothing too much to do or suffer for him.

4 Let this teach you to magnifie and blesse the Name of Christ, to prize him, love him, and cleave to him all our dayes; will you not prize and love him that hath done so much for you?

I remember I have read a story of an *Elephant*, who being fallen down, and unable to help himself, or get up again, by reason of the inflexiblenes of his legs, a Forrester coming by helped him up, wherewith the *Elephant* by the very instinct of nature was so affected, that he followed this man, would do any thing for him, and never left him till his dying day. Now if there be such love expresst by brute beasts, to those that have done them any good, should not we much more love and prize Christ that

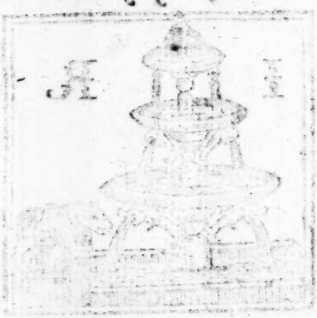
that hath done so much for us; for we were fallen, and could not recover or help our selves, and Christ hath lift us up, and redeemed us with his own blood, when we were lost and undone. O how should this provoke us to cleave unto Christ, to love him, and obey him, and yield subjection to him all our dayes!

FINIS.

To be sold by *John Rothwel*, at the Fountain and Bear in Cheap-side:

Anno Dom. 1654.

HARVARD COLLEGE LIBRARY
FROM THE LIBRARY
OF F. L. GAY
JUNE 1, 1916



THE ZEALOUS CHRISTIAN

Taking Heaven by

HOLY VIOLENCE:

IN SEVERAL

SERMONS

Tending to direct men

How { *To bear with Zeal,* / *To pray with importunity.*

Preached by that faithful servant of *Jesus Christ,*

Mr. *CHRISTOPHER LOVE,*

Late Minister of *Laurence Jury,* London.

--The violent take it by force, Mat. 11. 12.

LONDON,

Printed for *John Rothwell,* at the Fountain and Bear in *Goldsmiths row,* in *Cheap-side,* 1654.

HARVARD COLLEGE LIBRARY
FROM THE LIBRARY
OF F. L. GAY
JUNE 1, 1916

TO THE
CHRISTIAN
Reader.

READER:

THe good acceptance which this Authors Treatiſes, (already publiſhed by us) have found, and the good ſucceſſe they have had among the people of God, together with the importunate deſires of many godly perſons, that were hearers of theſe *SERMONS*, have put us upon recommending them to the world. The ſubject of theſe Sermons is not only pious but ſeaſonable, *Every thing* (ſaith *Solomon*) *is beautifull in its ſeaſon*, *Eccleſ.3.11.* The times wherein we live are famous for *a Form of godlineſſe*, and no leſſe infamous for the wont of the *Power* of it. Nothing is

more common then for men to hear, and pray, and perform the out-ſide-duties of Religion: nothing more rare then for men to do theſe things as becomes the Goſpel. Men have ſo inured themſelves to diſputes about the circumſtantials of Worſhip, that ſubſtantials are loſt in the ſcuffle. And therefore it is commendable in a Miniſter to reduce the thoughts and hearts of people from needleſſe controverſies to the practicals of Chriſtianity. As *Socrates* was commended for bringing down *Philoſophie* from high and ſublime ſpeculation, to uſe and practice.

It was the care of this Reverend Authour, not ſo much to gratifie the fancies of men, as to work upon their affections, and to direct them in the ordering of their converſation: and that the rather, becauſe he obſerved moſt men had more heat in their Brains, then in their Hearts. That zeal that once appeared in the profeſſours of this Nation, is evaporated. That violence that ſomtimes was in the people of this Nation after Sermons and all Ordinances, is now abated, and grown remiſſe; nay, in ſome, the hatred wherewith they hate the Ordinances and people of God, is greater then ever was the love wherewith they loved them. That praying Spirit, that not long ago was ſhed abroad in the hearts of Gods people, is now as it were departed.

It is therefore high time to beſpeak this careleſſe Nation, or rather the profeſſors of this Nation, with that meſſage which God ſent to the Church of *Epheſus*, *Remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do thy firſt works, or elſe I will come againſt thee quickly, and remove thy Candleſtick out of his place.* *Revel.2.5.*

And oh! may theſe enſuing Sermons be uſeful to revive thoſe ſparks of zeal and importunity, that lie as it

were

were under the aſhes. That was the end which the Author aimed at when he preached them to his Congregation, and that is a main end that we look to and hope for in the publication of them. The times wherein we live are times of much hypocriſie. There are many among us *that ſay they are Jews, and are not*; that have a *name to live, and are dead*: yea, there are many that *ſeem to be religious*, and yet not only deceive others, but alſo *deceive their own ſelves*. And therefore it is time for every man to ſearch and trie *if there be any way of wickedneſſe in him*. All is not gold that gliſters, nor are all Saints that ſo call themſelves, or are ſo called by others. *Rev.* 2. 9, 3, 1.

Here then is a Touch-ſtone by which you may examine your ſelves: Here is a Balance of the Sanctuary, wherein you may weigh your graces, and ſee whether they be light or no. It is one of the vaineſt and moſt fooliſh things in the world for men to cheat themſelves of eternal happineſs. We count it folly for a man to ſuffer himſelf to be cheated in a bargain, and yet what is loſt in one bargain may be regained in another. But here he that is cheated, is cheated irrecoverably. The loſs of the ſoul is irreparable. Precious is the redemption of ſouls, and it ceaſeth for ever. And yet there is a ſtrange ſtupidity among the ſons of men, whereby they are willing to be deceived, and jugled out of their ſoul-happineſs. They are willing to reſt themſelves upon any groundleſs preſumption, though it be ſo weak that they dare not put it to trial in their own hearts, themſelves being Judges O all you poor deluded ſouls! *How long will you love vanity, and follow after lies?* When you may go a ſure way, why will you run a hazard? Awake therefore O thou that ſleepeſt, and ſeriouſly betake thy ſelf to this weighty, neceſſary and profitable duty of examination; *Pſal.* 4.

and

and in this work we hope this Treatiſe will be uſeful and acceptable; which if it be done, and the other branch not left undone, the Authours deſire in preaching is ſatisfied, and our expectation in publiſhing anſwered; and that both thoſe ends may be obteined, is the earneſt deſire of

Thoſe that ſeek not
yours, but you:

Edmund Calamy.

Simeon Aſhe.

Jeremiah Whitaker.

William Taylor.

Matthew Pool.

Matthevv 11. 12.

And from the dayes of John *the Baptist until now, the Kingdom of heaven ſuffereth violence, and the violent take it by force*

Sermons Preacht at Lawrence *Jury April* 22. 1649. *Sermon* I. The Context opened.

THis Text is part of the large commendation that Chriſt gives of the perſon and Miniſtery of *John* the Baptiſt. *John* was a crier in the Wilderneſs to publiſh the glory of Chriſt, and Chriſt an Herauld to proclaim the praiſe of *John*. And this he doth,

1 For his conſtancy in the doctrine of Religion, *verſe* 7. *What went you out to ſee? a reed ſhaken with the winde?* a light, fickle, and inconſtant Preacher, that like a reed turnes with every winde of doctrine. *John* was no ſuch man, not like a reed, to yield to the ſtream or blaſt of every winde, but like the oake or cedar that ſtands unmoveably in the midſt of the greateſt ſtormes.

2. For his holineſs and high meaſure of mortification, *verſ* 8. *What went you out to ſee? A man cloathed in ſoft raiment? John* was no ſuch man. He was not at all addicted to the garbe and pompe of the Court, but *He had a raiment of camels hair, and a leathern girdle about his loines*, *Matth.* 3. 4.

3 By comparing him with the former Prophets, with thoſe Teachers that went before him, *Verſe* 9. *What went you out to ſee? a Prophet? Yea, I ſay to you, and more then a Prophet*, & *Verſe* 11. *Verily, I ſay unto you. Amongſt them that are born of women, there*

hath not risen a greater then John the Baptist. He gives him the precedency above all his Predecessours; not in regard of the dignity of his office, but in respect of the perspicuity of his doctrine. Yet lest he might be proud himself, or others too much admire him, it is added by way of qualification in the end of the 11th. *Verse*, *He that is least in the Kingdome of heaven is greater then he.* Those Disciples and Apostles that should live after the Resurrection of Christ, (from whence the Gospel or Kingdom of Heaven is dated) should be greater then *John*, in regard of that full knowledge and clear manifestation they should have of Christ.

4 He commends him for the successfulness of his Ministery, and that is set forth in the Text: *From the dayes of John the Baptist the Kingdom of Heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.* A little for the explication of the Text.

The Text opened.

Cœlum-Empyreum.

By the Kingdome of Heaven] is not meant the glorious seat of the blessed Angels, but the Evangelical state of the Christian Church. [a] It signifies the preaching of the Gospel, and propagation of the Church. [b] It notes that state and condition of the Church which is properly called Christian. The Kingdome of Heaven is in Scripture interpreted a breaking off from the observation of the Ceremonial law, and a publishing of the Gospel by *John* the Baptist, and so it begun when *John* did first preach the Gospel. And whereas *Matthew* tels us, *Matth* 3.1. *John preached, saying, Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. Mark* calls this, *The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Mark* 1.1. And therefore it is that *John* is called an Evangelical Preacher.

a *Regnum cœlorum denotat prædicationem Evangelii, & propagationem Ecclesiæ.* Paræus.

b *Regnum Dei significat statum, & conditionem Ecclesiæ, quæ propriè Christiana dicitur.* Camero *in Matth.* 18.1.

Suffereth violence] Violence is not to be taken as it is in our dayes of opposition, and as in the dayes of persecution; as it is in our dayes in opposition to right and justice, and as it was at the first comming in of the Gospel, when the wicked men of the World did go about to oppose and obstruct the publishing of the Gospel; but it is an holy violence, whereby men press forward to obtain the grace of this Kingdome. And so it is generally taken to be an holy violence of affection, or a gracious disposition that was implanted and wrought in the hearts of many men in *John* Baptists dayes.

Vio-

Violence is here oppoſed to lukewarmneſs and moderation in Religion, to that coldneſs and frozenneſs that is in the hearts of men under the preaching of the Word. It is called an holy violence, to diſtinguiſh between them that were Chriſtians indeed and other men; to diſtinguiſh them from the Scribes and Phariſees that were cold and frozen under the Miniſtery of the Goſpel. They were ſo earneſt after Chriſt in the Goſpel, that no difficulties or diſcouragements could take them off from their purſuits after Chriſt. [c] They were ſo greedy of Chriſt, that no force could pluck them away, but they would rather die then be drawn away from the Goſpel. It is a metaphor taken from Warriours, who force their paſſage into a City, and take it by ſtorm, and divide the ſpoil. The parallel phraſe is, *Luke* 16. 16. *Every man preſſeth into the Kingdom of God.*

c *Adeò avidi ſunt ut nullâ vi abſtrahi poſſint, ſed potius moriantur quàm abſtrahantur ab Evangèlio.* Luther.

For the period of time wherein this violence was declared and expreſſed; it was in the 15th. yeer of *Tiberius*, as you read, *Luke* 3. 1. in the 29th. yeer of Chriſt.

Many doctrines may be raiſed from theſe words, but I ſhall not multiply Obſervations. The firſt and main doctrine is taken from the time wherein this violence was, and the Doctrine is this.

Doct.

At the firſt promulgation of the Goſpel, the preaching of the Word was more ſucceſful, multitudes of men did expreſs more holy violence and vehemency of affection towards the ſervice and worſhip of God then in any age beſide. From the dayes of *John* the Baptiſt until now, the Kingdom of Heaven ſuffereth violence. The people were cold and frozen under the Miniſtery of the Scribes and Phariſees, they were heated under the Miniſtery of *John*.

d *Frigebant ſub miniſterio legis Scribarum & Phariſæorum, fervebant ſub miniſterio* Joannis. Muſculus.

In the handling of this point two Queſtions muſt be anſwered.

1 Whence it came to paſs, that people were at that time ſo fervent and affectionate towards the Goſpel, that the Goſpel was ſo ſucceſful then?

2 Whence it comes to paſs, that it is no more ſucceſful now, or why that holy violence is now abated?

Queſt. 1. Why the Goſpel ſo ſucceſful then?

1 What are the reaſons why it was ſo ſucceſful in the dayes of *John* the Baptiſt? I anſwer, divers reaſons may be rendered.

Reason 1. *Naturæ hominum novitatis avidæ.* Mark 1.27.

1 Because of the novelty of the Gospel. New things are most affecting and pleasing to mans nature. This was the ground of the peoples admiration at Christ, *Mark* 1.27. *They were all amazed, saying, What new Doctrine is this? For with authority commandeth he the unclean spirits, and they obey him.* We are like to the Athenians, of whom it is written, *Acts* 17. 21. *They spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to heare some new thing.* While *Johns* Ministery was new and fresh, all rejoyced in it, *John* 5.35. *Ye were willing for a season to rejoyce in his light.* And so the Ministery of *Paul* was most successful among the Thessalonians in the beginning of it, 1 *Thess.* 2.1. *You know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain.* It was *Melanchthons* observation, that men were favourers & followers of the Gospel when it first came into a place.

1 Thess. 2.1. τὴν εἴσοδον ἡμῶν. *Primum adventum nostrum. Principiis favebant, &c.*

Reason 2.

2 Another ground of the successfulness of the Gospel at that time is this: Because the prophecies of the Old Testament were to be accomplished, both for the extension of the Church in regard of place and persons, and the intension of affection. 1 For the extension of the Church in regard of place and persons, That was fore-spoken of in holy Writ, *Isa.* 54.1, 2. *Sing, ô barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travel with childe: for more are the children of the desolate then the children of the married wife, saith the Lord. Enlarge the place of thy tents, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations; spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes, &c.* Which place is applied by *Paul* to the conversion of the Gentiles upon the first promulgation of the Gospel, *Gal.* 4.27. where he cites the very words of the first Verse now mentioned.

Isa. 54.1, 2.

Another prophecie of the same nature you have, *Isa.* 2.2. *It shall come to pass in the last dayes, that the mountain of the Lords house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hils, and all Nations shall flow unto it.* Which promise in the same words is repeated, *Micah* 4.1. Another promise of the same nature is, *Isa* 60.3,4,5. and in many other places, which it is needless now to mention.

Isa. 2.2.

Isa. 60.3,4,5.

2 There were promises also for the intention of the affections, *Isa.* 40.31. *They that wait upon the Lord shall renue their strength, they shall mount up with wings as Eagles.* The Eagle is a bird of the strongest and highest flight of any that flies in the air.

Isa. 40.31.

air. So *Zach.*12.8. *In that day he that is feeble shall be as David, and the house of David shall be as God.* So *Psal.*110.3. It is propheſied of the firſt bringing in of the Goſpel, that *Thy people ſhall be a willing people in the day of thy power.* And this was to be when *God ſhould ſend forth the rod of his power out of Sion,* as it is *verſe* 2. You know what *Huſhai* ſaid of *David,* 2 *Sam.* 17.8. He and his men were *mighty men, and chafed in their mindes as a Bear robbed of her whelps in the field.* And yet he that is feeble ſhall be as *David. Deodate* refers this promiſe to the beginning of the Goſpel, and ſo *Cartwright.* That is the ſecond reaſon. Zach.12.°. 2 Sam.17.8.

3 The Lord did this to put a greater glory upon the Goſpel, and to raiſe the eſtimation of it in the hearts of men: for had the Goſpel had but a few converts, and had it had but a little ſucceſs at the firſt promulgation of it, the people would not ſo much have taken notice of it, neither would they ſo much have admired it, nor ſo highly eſteemed of it, as they did. *Reaſon* 3.

4 This comes to paſs becauſe of the perſpicuity of the doctrine of the Goſpel above that of the Law. The Goſpel came now to be preached to the peoples capacity more then it was in the time of the Law. Though it is true, that pure Goſpel for the ſubſtance of it was preached in the time of the Law, yet not ſo plainly as in the time of the Goſpel. For the Law is nothing elſe but a dark Goſpel, and the Goſpel nothing elſe but a clear Law. The law was hid and veiled under dark ſhadows and ceremonies: But the Goſpel was clear and evident. This you have fully ſet forth, 2 *Cor.*3.15. *When* Moſes *was read, there was a veil upon their hearts, verſe* 16. and when *they turn to the Lord, the veil ſhall be taken away.* And *Verſe* 18. *But we all with open face behold as in a glaſs the glory of the Lord &c.* This is alſo foretold, *Iſa.*30.26. at the promulgation of the Goſpel, *The light of the Moon ſhall be as the light of the Sun, and the light of the Sun ſhall be ſevenfold as the light of ſeven dayes, &c.* *Reaſon* 4. 2 Cor.3.14. Iſa.30.26.

5 Becauſe of that great and glorious liberty which the Goſpel inſtated them in above the Law, I do not mean ſenſual, but a Chriſtian & holy, a Goſpel-liberty. Thus Baptiſm was appointed in the room of Circumciſion. Our Saviour made this proffer, *Come unto me, all you that are weary and heavy-laden, & I will give you reſt, Mat.*11.28. Which place is not onely to be underſtood *Reaſon* 5. Matth.11.2°.

or